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AUTHOR Teitel, Lee
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ABSTRACT

This report looks in depth at four Massachusetts service delivery areas (SDAs) and the educational providers with whom they interact. Chapter 1 reports the types and status of coordination in each region. Each case narrative has three parts: (1) a coordination "snapshot" that summarizes institutional players and types of coordination occurring; (2) institutional leaders' perceptions of coordination and obstacles and incentives to coordinate; and (3) a conclusion highlighting the outstanding issues. Chapter 2 looks at specific examples of institutional choice points and explores aspects of the institutional level of cost benefit analyses as they contribute to coordination-related decision making. Chapter 3 offers suggestions for changes to the system to improve institutional assessments of the costs and benefits of coordination organized by the three levels at which the change could be implemented: local, regional, and state. Chapter 4 provides a summary of the institutional perceptions of barriers and incentives along with each institution's satisfaction level with the status quo and its desire to work for further coordination. Chapter 5 makes three conceptual observations about the relationship between the educational institutions and the Job Training Partnership Act system pertaining to the question of who delivers services; the chapter poses questions to stimulate discussion about overall system redesign or recommendations to promote greater coordination. Information on methodology is appended. (YLB)

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State House, Room 51
Boston, MA 02133
Tel. (617) 727-2499

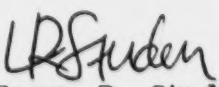
PREFACE

The ensuing report is part of the State Council's ongoing effort to improve coordination between education and employment training. It is accompanied by the Council's statement of response and recommendations. Its primary purpose is to serve the Commonwealth through raising issues and offering recommendations. Moreover, due to its focus on service delivery areas, vocational schools, and community colleges, the research report and accompanying Council statement address the Perkins Act requirements for assessing and making recommendations relative to the level of coordination occurring between the Job Training Partnership Act and vocational education.

For several years, the State Council has been responsible for a substantial amount of State level dialogue and initiative involving coordination between education and employment training. It is, therefore, most significant that this report focuses on key actors at the local and regional levels. For three years, we have been convening State agency executives, school superintendents and college presidents to create more effective working relationships between their various institutions. While the content of this assessment is extremely important to policymakers, equally important is that local planners and providers have now become participants in the Council's search to provide citizens with improved services through a more coordinated delivery system.

The Council wishes to express its appreciation to the Massachusetts Board of Education for funding two consecutive projects that have allowed us to maintain the highest priority for addressing this important issue. That funding provided important assistance to this report, and we trust that it will stimulate action within the State. We are also pleased that we were able to add substantial Council funds to this study and believe that the total effort will also be of assistance to the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor in their search for stronger ties between job training and vocational education.

Finally, the State Council also extends its most sincere gratitude to all those individuals who have provided so much time and effort toward making these coordination projects so successful. This report is testimony to that support. The State Council pledges its continued emphasis on developing improved relationships between institutions and sectors.



Laura R. Studen
Chair

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INTRODUCTION

Key findings from the 1987 coordination study

In 1987, the Massachusetts State Council on Vocational Education published its first required report on coordination between the Job Training Partnership Act system, with its Service Delivery Area (SDAs) and Private Industry Councils (PICs, as of January 1989, known as Regional Employment Boards or REBs), entitled Vocational Education/Employment Training Coordination in Massachusetts. It utilized a survey approach as its principal methodology and provides an excellent starting point for this two year follow-up. Two major categories of its findings have been particularly helpful in shaping the current study: the definitions by the participants of desired levels of coordination as well as the participants' perceptions of the barriers and incentives to achieving those levels. The survey results are interesting both for those categories in which the SDA's and the educational providers found themselves in agreement, as well as those in which they did not. The agreements help define a kind of consensus about what shape coordination should take, or what the most important barriers and incentives to it are. The disagreements draw attention to what may be important differences in perception. These differences could only be noted (as they were in 1987) in a survey report, but they could not be followed up. The case study approach of the current study uses these differences as indicators of interesting and potentially important issues to probe.

1- Desired levels of coordination (from the participants of the 1987 study). According to the 1987 survey, coordination can range along a continuum from the sharing of information at "arms-length," to joint planning, to the relatively intimate forms of joint involvement with program delivery. Since it is often easier for organizations to coordinate on activities that do not involve serious challenges to their autonomy or require significant inter-dependence, not surprisingly, the 1987 study reports a high degree of unanimity on the desirability of activities like "sharing local labor market information," "reciprocal referral procedures for participants," and "joint or reciprocal technical assistance" (page 61). However, the respondents show a much greater divergence in their views about the desirability of more intimate forms of collaboration that require institutions to rely on each other for delivery of services, which often means that they have to deal with the stickier issues of mutual judgement and quality control. In contrast to the unanimity with which all respondents rate information sharing activities as highly desirable, none of the SDA's surveyed include contracting as an essential part of their view of coordination. On the other hand, the educational providers see the delivery of services quite differently. Three of the four categories of educational providers (regional vocational schools, community colleges and city/independent vocational schools) expect their schools to have a "right of first refusal" for training programs, or picture the vocational education system as the hub for PIC training. Others see active roles for their schools in providing contracted training programs or selling "slots" to the SDA/PICs (p.9).

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2- Barriers and incentives to coordination (from the 1987 study).

In addition to highlighting a different set of expectations that existed about the scope and depth of coordination between the educational and employment and training sectors, the 1987 study provides an excellent summary of the barriers and incentives to coordination. High on the lists of all respondents' barriers are turf issues, conflicting definitions of allowable services, staff and time demands of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, and difficulties of communication. Again, of particular interest are those barriers rated high by one sector and not another. For instance, the SDAs rated JTPA performance standards and performance-based contracting as important barriers, while most of the educational providers did not. Similarly, regional vocational schools and, to a lesser extent, community colleges, rated the desire of some SDAs to provide direct services as an important obstacle to their involvement in JTPA training. The SDAs saw that as a minimal problem, putting it near the bottom of their list (p. 19).

The commonly held perceptions (by all respondents) of incentives to coordination include personal relationships among administrators, the desire to provide more comprehensive services to clients and the push from the governor and state leadership. On the other hand, Federally mandated sign-offs on Perkins applications are viewed uniformly as of little help in promoting coordination (pages 15-16). An interesting divergence relating to one of the mandated activities points to very different perceptions of what is going on in an important information sharing activity. One hundred percent of the SDA's report that educational institutions were offered the

opportunity to review or comment on their local JTPA plans, yet only 66% of the community colleges, 43% of the regional vocational schools and 20 - 30% of the other education providers believe their institutions had the opportunity to do this (p. 42).

The 1987 study notes commonly held views of the gains of coordination reported by all respondents, including increased numbers of participants and funds, better staff quality and service variety, and improved access to facilities. Futhermore, the study concludes, based on its survey sample, that the benefits of coordination more than outweigh the perceived costs in the views of all the sectors (the providers and the SDAs) (p. 57).

Based on this assessment, and the findings that the most serious obstacles are bureaucratic, and the best enablers of coordination appear to be personal relationships, the study goes on to make two key recommendations: that efforts be made to promote dialogue and that state wide attempts be made to reduce bureaucratic impediments like paperwork and report requirements.

<u>How the current study differs</u>

The 1987 study provides an excellent and very helpful summary of what the survey respondents (about 53% response rate) viewed as desirable in coordination, and what they saw as the barriers and incentives. However, because of the survey nature of the report, there were some kinds of data that could not be gathered. First, inherent in any voluntary survey with less than 100% response rate, is the question about just what the

attitudes of the non-respondents were. Although it is impossible to determine, perhaps failure to respond to a coordination questionnaire is associated with some difficulties with the concept, or even a more negative attitude toward coordination. Furthermore, due to the nature of the survey (which groups institutions by type, rather than with whom they interacted), there is a lack of a clear picture of what education institutions were actually delivering what JTPA funded services and to whom (p. 96).

The current report takes a different approach, which is to look with greater depth at just 4 of the 15 SDAs and the educational providers in their region with whom they interact (or might potentially interact). This includes several institutions and SDAs which did not respond to the survey. [NOTE: See Appendix I for methodology, including site selection, access, confidentiality, and interview lists.] This enables the 1989 study to include more information about what happens at the local level, in the interplay between and among the local institutions. It also enables the research to go from a 53% response rate across the whole state to 100% coverage of a smaller section of the system. Representatives of all the local institutional actors -- the SDA, the vocational technical schools and the community colleges -- participated in special meetings convened by the State Council on Vocational Education to discuss coordination or were interviewed in person or by telephone.

The case analysis utilized here will enable this study to:

1-- verify the list of barriers and incentives developed in the 1987 statewide survey;

2-- look closely at some of the different patterns of coordination that exist in a sampling of SDAs; and

3-- analyze how factors at the local level affect the way the barriers and incentives to coordination get played out in a particular area.

Reporting of data and analysis

Following this introduction, which highlights a few of the important themes from the 1987 report, the first chapter of the study describes the nature of the coordination reported in each of the four SDAs. Although the cases are reported pseudonymously, and background information on the SDA or the schools is kept to a minimum to protect the anonymity of the respondents, no composites have been used, nor have any facts, other than the names of the places and people, been altered. Any known aspects of interrelationships of the participants that appear to be relevant to the coordination study have been included.

The second chapter begins the analysis section of the report. It looks at specific examples of institutional choice points and explores aspects of the institutional level of cost-benefit analyses as they contribute to coordination-related decisionmaking. Examples include why one regional vocational school consistently seeks coordination opportunities with its SDA while a nearby school of comparable size and structure never does. The chapter also takes a closer look at the dynamics of the decisionmaking process by which an SDA or a PIC decides whether to run a program through its own skills center (if it has one) or to contract it out to a vocational school, a community college, community-based organization or other vendor.

The third chapter draws on suggestions from the field -- recommendations of the respondents to improve coordination.

The fourth chapter picks up the common themes reported across all four

sites about the kinds of coordination that exist. The chapter provides a summary of the institutional perceptions of barriers and incentives along with each institution's satisfaction level with the status quo and its desire to work for further coordination. It is a follow-up and elaboration of the survey questions asked in 1987 and it points out which significant findings of this study differ from the ones in 1987.

The fifth and final chapter draws conclusions about the way coordination fits into the relationship between employment and training and the community college/vocational school systems and suggests some questions that night be used to frame any discussion about recommendations for the future.

CHAPTER ONE

Case Descriptions

In this section, the types and status of coordination in each of the four selected regions is reported. Each case narrative is presented in three parts:

1- A coordination "snapshot" summarizes the institutional players of each region and the types of coordination going on in the region, both at the information-sharing and planning level and the service delivery level.

2- The views of the leaders of each of the institutions in the region are reported on their perception of what kind of coordination exists in the area; and on what they see as the obstacles and incentives to coordinate for their own organization and for the other institutions in the region.

3- A brief conclusion highlights the outstanding issues relating to coordination in the region.

As noted, the cases included in this chapter describe four of the fifteen SDAs in Massachusetts. No facts have been altered, nor have any known facts that appear to be relevant to the coordination study been omitted. However, to preserve the anonymity of the respondents, background information on the SDA or the schools has been kept to a minimum and the following pseudonyms, grouped by region, have been used:

Alistair Service Delivery Area

Allendale Regional Vocational Technical School
Axelrod Regional Vocational Technical School
Samuel Adams Regional Vocational Technical School

Aston Community College
Arlington Community College

Bakerston Service Delivery Area

Bakerston Area Regional Vocational Technical School
Chester Barnett Regional Vocational Technical School

Barrington Community College

Cookville Service Delivery Area

Clarkson Regional Vocational Technical School

Charlton Falls Community College

Drumlin Service Delivery Area

Drumlinton City Vocational Technical School
Derry City Vocational Technical School
Danforth Regional Vocational Technical School

Drumlin Community College
Derry Community College

Alistair Service Delivery Area

Coordination Snapshot

Comprised of a mix of urban and suburban cities and towns, the Massachusetts Service Delivery Area referred to in this study by the pseudonym "Alistair" has two regional vocational-technical schools, "Allendale" and "Axelrod," which fall primarily in its geographic range, and a third RVT, "Samuel Adams," that is partially in the SDA but also relates substantially to another SDA (on whose PIC board, for instance, Adams' superintendent serves). Alistair also includes "Aston" Community College and "Arlington" Community College, although here again, Aston also has ties to another SDA. The occupational programs of the city vocational schools play a relatively minor role, with the director of one city's program sitting on the PIC, but the rest are largely uninvolved.

Alistair is considered by state-level employment and training staff members to have above-average levels of coordination and it is certainly relatively high among the four SDAs sampled for this report. Coordination on information-sharing is mostly done through an education subcommittee of the PIC. Representatives of Arlington Community College, Allendale RVT and one of the city occupational education programs are active subcommittee members. Despite these connections, the meeting convened by the State Council on Vocational Education as part of this research project was evidently the first forum in which all the institutions of the region met together. Participants used the opportunity to discuss who had done what labor market study, where they were available, etc. One community college representative, apparently pleased by the open exchange, proposed that the

group called together by the State Council might plan to continue meeting on its own.

Alistair SDA has no skills center of its own and utilizes a range of vendors, including the region's schools and community colleges to provide the services its clients need. These contracts are distributed through an annual competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. In 1988, Aston Community College had three training contracts from the SDA, Arlington Community College one; Allendale RVT, one, and Axelrod RVT none. Adams RVT holds no full contracts with the SDA but sells them slots for individual referral of clients, who then get mixed into Adams' regular classes.

Institutional Perspectives: The SDA

Alistair's SDA director speaks highly of the value of coordination with the education providers both for information-sharing and service delivery. The PIC philosophy is to only provide support services, and it draws on the resources of the community for skills training and other instruction. It subcontracts this work to community based organizations, private vendors, community colleges, RVTs and city occupational education programs.

Although the SDA director was not specific about the breakdown of to whom these contracts are let, based on other data reported elsewhere, it appears that somewhere between 5 and 20 percent go directly to some form of public educational provider. In addition to those programs which are contracted through the RFP process, the SDA buys slots in a variety of ongoing educational and training programs. In fact, one of the vocational schools, Samuel Adams, now responds to the SDA's RFP by sending a list of its ongoing offerings into which they will sell slots for adults. It is an

offer which the Alistair SDA has been quicker to take advantage of than any of the other SDAs to which it has been offered.

One of the incentives cited by the SDA to coordinate with the vocational education system is economic: schools are generally cheaper than private vendors. One of the barriers is getting schools used to performance objectives tied to placing students into work. The SDA director personally feels that often further schooling is an appropriate outcome, but points out that the SDA itself is required to meet certain performance guidelines of the federal government. Moreover, he notes the problem schools had with performance contracts were mostly at the outset and were more in the anticipation than in reality:

> Initially performance based contracts were seen as a real big problem, especially by vocational schools. We said it had to be done. They said "We can do placement, but have never really been held to it." But I haven't had any problem with it in the last few years. There has been no real pattern of their not delivering.

One problem which has persisted, according to the SDA director, is the unwillingness of some of the vocational schools and city occupational education programs to bid on JTPA contracts. He describes how frustration about this led him to offer a special bidders' conference held for vocational educators last year. Although the meeting was well attended and there was good discussion and what seemed like a great deal of interest, nothing has come of it. He cites what he sees as the biggest barrier to further coordination: <u>attitude</u>. People in the vocational system, according to him, are "not aggressive enough," not used to writing proposals and "selling" themselves, too used to "having the money handed to them."

The chief incentive he sees offsetting that inertia is the desire of

some institutions for a "piece of the action." Even though schools cannot really make money on these contracts, he sees the interest from some RVTs and community colleges as an attempt to "maintain their system -- selling programs in an era of dwindling resources."

Institutional Perspectives: The Community Colleges

Both of the community colleges in the region have provided direct services on a small scale -- up to two or three programs -- for the SDA, but their experiences and attitudes are quite different. The Arlington staff member associated with external programs, who sits on the Alistair PIC, speaks highly of the benefits of coordination, although she acknowledges that there are formidable barriers. One problem is the "geographic nightmare" caused by the non-overlap of the SDAs and the operating areas of the community colleges. She details her efforts to put together a program utilizing more than one funding source requiring a multiplicity of forms that were not consistent with one another: "I had to spend half of my time doing the paperwork."

Although she complains about it, she is willing to put in some extra time because she believes in the concept of coordination -- "it makes the public sector look good" -- and she feels tied into and involved with the PIC and its processes. The principal factor in deciding whether to go to the extra trouble for a particular project, however, is whether it allows her to do something her college could not otherwise do. She describes her decisionmaking process as one which takes into account what she sees as a not very favorable climate for coordination:

> I ask two questions: will a coordinated program be better than what I can do myself? And, are the barriers surmountable? Sometimes I put my foot in the water to test it and it is so cold.

On balance, her philosophical view is clearly in favor of coordination. Nonetheless, PIC related activities are fairly minimal and marginal to her main endeavors at the college, and she appears reasonably satisfied with that arrangement, wishing only that the bureaucratic obstacles were reduced.

Aston Community College, on the other hand, hopes for more from its relationship with JTPA. Consequently, it has much deeper dissatisfactions with both Alistair and another SDA to which it relates. Aston leadership feels unhappy with virtually every stage of the process. At the information sharing level, it feels left out. Although Aston's planning team annually sends both PICs reports of their 3 year plans, and even sends copies of its proposals to other funding sources in the employment and training field, the team feels as though it gets no information in return. Specifically, members report that their requests for information on the PICs' budgets, or even sufficient notice from one of the SDAs (not Alistair) of the PIC's funding priorities have gone unheeded. According to one respondent,

> We allowed them time for reorganization from CETA to JTPA. Maybe they have other priorities. But no one is looking at this area and taking the comprehensive view of its needs. ...
>
> We find it difficult to acquaint them with our problems. We get no response. When we talk to them, [they say] there are always programs coming up, but we are simply not in on it. ...
>
> Everyone is playing solo. They [the SDA] are very close to the chest with information.

At the service provision level, Aston feels sufficiently undervalued as a source of training by the SDA that it has repeatedly tried, unsuccessfully, to find out what proportion of the PIC's contracts or money go to educational providers. Aston staff members believe it to be minuscule and feel that more pressure should be placed on PICs to utilize educational providers, especially community colleges. A comment which sums up this sense of being left out is included here, even though the quote is not independently verifiable and does not necessarily come from anyone associated with the Alistair SDA. An Aston staff member reports that he was told by "someone who works for one of the PICs" that "your contracts are nuisance money, just so we can say we are working with the community college." Another Aston official adds that, when she talks to people in other states, she has discovered that in most places, "The JTPA/PIC systems have much more to do with community colleges than what appears from where I stand."

Despite the strong feeling that it is being left out, Aston has continued to try to be a service provider for the PICs. But its occasional success in landing contracts (it is running three programs this year) has led to other problems relating to payment and cash flow. Staff members note a long lag between when the contracts are approved and supposed to begin and when payment arrives. Although Aston has to incur expenses to start the program on the agreed-upon dates, it may wait six months or more before receiving any money. This up-front money is particularly hard to find in the current fiscally tight times. Staffers note that chasing down relatively small amounts of money ($20-30,000) have required inordinate amounts of time from the business office personnel. The performance-based nature of the PIC contracts exacerbates this problem. It involves a high

commitment of staff time and follow-up over a long period of time. Although Aston people say that ultimately there is no problem meeting placement targets, the fact that the SDA withholds the money until targets are met adds to even more cash flow problems. Another problem relating to the delivery of programs is geographic -- because Aston draws students from a wider area than the cities and towns of the PIC, it must either turn students away from particular programs or it has to fight with the PIC to allow outsiders in a funded program.

These kinds of problems have been so irksome that a few years back some of the program directors, who dealt with them on a day-to-day level wanted to give up working with the PICs. The administration would not permit them to because it felt that the student performance and program quality were of sufficient caliber that they should continue to be run. The lack of other sources of flexible or discretionary money is the key incentive that pushes Aston Community College to continue to deal with the large obstacles to coordination.

Institutional Perspectives: The Vocational Technical Schools

The response of the different vocational schools in the region to the idea of coordination with the JTPA system also represent a sharp contrast, of a different nature. While Allendale, like Arlington, has run some programs with the PIC and is candid about the pro and cons, Axelrod has not and probable will not try any. Although the difference between the two community colleges seems to be rooted in differing association and experiences with the PIC, the RVT contrast appears to be one of attitude.

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The key elements of this contrast are presented briefly here; more of the comparison will be probed in Chapter 3.

The principal barrier to involvement for Axelrod RVT is the lack of any perceived incentives to do so. Axelrod, which formerly had an extensive adult education program, gave almost all of it up when the budget-cutting referendum, Proposition 2 1/2, was passed. Its leadership sees only costs -- wear and tear on machines, extra utility bills, risks of losing money on performance based contracts -- and no benefits to getting involved with JTPA programs. An Axelrod staff member points out, that although they are interested in working with adults, the way the system is set up, the obstacles seem unsurmountable...

> I see this [coordination] as the state telling us, "I dare you to do this." Every stumbling block possible is thrown in the way.

...And the incentives seem nonexistent:

> There is really nothing in this [coordination] for us. We have to survive without it. [With Proposition 2 1/2] most of us had to cut back on administrators. We have to put our efforts into where money comes from. Even if there were something in here [program delivery for the PIC] to cover service of our equipment that is being used, there is still no incentive. We shut down for two weeks in the summer and save fifteen thousand dollars in energy costs alone. What incentive is there for me to turn it [the school] on?

Allendale RVT, on the other hand, retains an administrator who devotes about half his time to external programs, including JTPA activities. Although its leadership complains about the difficulties of geography (running JTPA programs which only serve some of its towns), paperwork, and performance contracts in which the school can actually lose money, the staff also see some important gains from the activities. School personnel cite incentives like improved service to their population, and resultant

enhanced image with taxpayers, and potential recruitment (through JTPA summer programs).

Nonetheless, even with a positive attitude, JTPA programs remain a marginal part of the external programs at Allendale, with other, less restrictive and more flexible funding sources preferred and JTPA often turned to as a last resort.

Adams RVT has chosen to neither give up on working with the JTPA system (like Axelrod) or to live with the frustrations of the RFP process like (Allendale). Instead, it has created a third option of providing slots to the SDA on a per student cost basis. These referrals "plug-in" to regular offerings, allowing the school to maintain existing programs despite declining regular enrollments.

The plug in concept grew out of an unpleasant experience with an RFP Adams won from another PIC in which the PIC had poorer recruitment than planned, thus delaying the start of the program and jeopardizing Adams' expected placement performance. Adams pulled out of the contract and formed a consortium with a few other community colleges and RVTs to provide a kind of catalog to the surrounding PICs of available slots in which to plug in referrals. It has been a bit of a sell job, with advocates of the slot system urging reluctant PICs to adopt what advocates call a cost-effective approach which is entirely within the spirit and the law authorizing the PICs. Although their offer has been widely distributed, their best response to date has been from the Alistair SDA.

Adams' superintendent expresses frustration with other PICs at insistence on the RFP approach and their reluctance to adopt the plug in

concept. While he notes that the fight has been difficult, the school is motivated by a simple but poverful incentive: "with the demographics as they are, if vocational schools do not serve older students, for the next five or six years at least, there will have to be major cutbacks. If I can fill seats, I don't have to close programs."

Outstanding Issues in the Region

Performance contracting, seen as a basic requirement by the SDA and considered by it not to be an obstacle for the educational providers is perceived as a hardship by the RVTs and minimally an inconvenience by one of the community colleges.

The frustration of the SDA in getting more educators involved and overcoming what it sees as poor attitude and inertia is at odds with the feeling of exclusion by one community college: Aston's sense of getting left out informationally, getting crumbs for contracts, and then having the contracts paid for in a manner that makes them almost unworkable.

Even the two providers in the region most enthusiastic about coordination (Allendale RVT and Arlington Community College) describe at some length the bureaucratic hardships they have to surmount to run even the minimal number of programs they do.

Bakerston Service Delivery Area

Coordination Snapshot

The Massachusetts region referred to in this study as the "Bakerston Service Delivery Area," is, like Alistair, comprised of a mix of suburban and urban areas, including a city with a large population of linguistic minorities. The educational providers in the area include "Barrington" Community College and two regional vocational technical schools, "Bakerston Area" RVT (BARVT), the "Chester Barnett" RVT and the "Bakerston City" School Department.

Informational and planning related coordination is rated as fair by many of the participants in the region. The principal mechanism is the theoretically open RFP process, so that, for instance, educational providers are welcome at early stages of the PIC's planning. Although this process allows them to be involved if they want to be, Barrington Community College rarely attends and the RVT's almost never do. One SDA staffer summarizes: "We have always asked people in to talk about planning, but it is remarkably hard to get people in to talk. No one wants to duplicate [services], but we don't know what each is doing." Several people at the SCOVE-sponsored meeting, including the SDA director and Barrington's president, suggested that the coordination might be improved if the people currently at the table were locked into a room with each other once a month.

One of the RVTs, the community college, as well as a private college in

the region, and the Bakerston schools are represented on the PIC board. Although there are frequently work-groups related to literacy, and other education-related topics, there is no standing education subcommittee.

On a service delivery level, like the Alistair SDA, Bakerston has no skills center and espouses a philosophy of farming out services on an RFP basis. According to one staff member: "We run nothing through the SDA unless we cannot find someone else to do it." The great bulk of the more than one hundred vendors the SDA used last year are community-based organizations (CBOs). Other suppliers include a vocational rehabilitation center, private contractors, and the Bakerston City public schools. Last year, one contract went to Barrington Community College (although there have been a number of programs in the past) and none to either RVT. There is a sense of competition among these providers and several comments were made about the "oversupply" of training facilities in the region. The SDA director captures this flavor:

> It [achieving better coordination] will take more than locking us in a room. Someone will have to make tough decisions about who is the lead institution. The PICs/REBs [Regional Employment Boards, replacing PICs in 1989] can have fun coordinating informational issues, but it will be hard to do this. ... All the sectors should be there, but there will be tough decisions [to be made]. Too many people are trying to do similar things in this region.
>
> [Later, after talking about the challenges of achieving better coordination of service delivery:]
>
> Otherwise we will have to go to the medieval solution for duplication -- go to a duel.

Part of the tension in the region has been between the SDA and the community college, hinging on the college's desire for a greater role in service delivery. The college's push for "presumptive delivery" status --

that it would be the provider turned to first for employment and training -- has historically had a cool reception from the SDA. In recent months, however, there has been some movement toward an accommodation, and the two institutions have submitted a precedent-setting joint proposal for other (non-JTPA) training money which gives the college presumptive delivery of any post-secondary courses which may result if they get the grant.

Institutional Perspectives: The SDA

Like in Alistair, there is an avowed interest on the part of the SDA in coordination with educational providers. This philosophical commitment is frequently overshadowed by a variety of obstacles so that only a few contracts for service actually go to any of the public education providers.

From the SDA point of view, the principal problem with working with the RVTs is timing -- the SDA almost always wants to offer programs during the same daytime "prime time" that the RVTs are generally offering their own. Declining enrollments in the two RVTs could theoretically diminish this obstacle, but the SDA reports "no indication from them that there is any reduction." One SDA staffer cites a good cooperative effort with BARVT to seek funding on an apprenticeship program that would meet after hours; he also notes the program would have served a different population than the usual JTPA client (single women with children who need access during the days) and would have been more similar to what the RVT usually serves. Based on this planning experience, he concludes that the attitudes are positive but that the potential for coordination is undercut by the insurmountable obstacle of the time conflict.

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The SDA attitude toward the community college is mixed, based largely on uneven results with performance contracting. While there have been many excellent JTPA programs run at Barrington, in the view of SDA staff, there have also been some big disappointments. SDA staff note the difference in focus between the two institutions, that the college is more interested in long-term education and less focused on immediate placement required by JTPA:

> They're happy with the outcome of the client going on to college and we cannot count that as a positive termination, unless the client is under 21. If you separate out that idea from performance standards [imposed by the Federal government], we agree that it's not a bad idea. However, because we are evaluated by JTPA standards, it will destroy our performance record.

Furthermore, because of the nature of the academic calendar, another staff member notes that the community college is winding down its operations during the summer, just when the job placement for many programs must often be done. In one of Barrington's recent SDA contracts, 16 out of 19 students went on to further college, creating a performance outcome "disaster" for the college, with ripple effects serious enough for the federal government to put the SDA into a "corrective action" sanction.

The SDA prides itself on a free and open RFP process, noting how other SDAs have skills centers which effectively lock out other institutions. Staff point to the review and complaint procedure available for an organization which feels it was treated unfairly (and note that Barrington has used that complaint process more than once). Nonetheless, SDA staffers, who rely on CBOs for much of their English-as-a-Second-Language and basic skills training, look askance when Barrington proposes to run a

program that could be done by some other provider with a better track record.

One of the "hot" issues in the Bakerston region is the conflict between assigning service contracts through the RFP process or through a "presumptive delivery" model, in which certain institutions would have the right of first refusal on particular kinds of training. Barrington Community College has pushed hard for presumptive status both regionally and statevide and has run into strong opposition from the SDA. One staff member objects because of the performance outcome problem alluded to earlier and because of the SDA's strong connections to many community based organizations that

> have contracted with us for years and years and have delivered for us. I would want to know why we would change that system. Ours is a free and open system. Other SDAs have skills centers that do some or all their training [which community colleges do not like] ... Why should we argue for presumptive delivery for the community college any more than for a skills center?

One area in which the SDA appears more willing to discuss presumptive delivery is in more advanced, post-secondary instruction that could really only be properly done by a community college. Staff express frustration that, even though repeated suggestions have been made to Barrington to propose higher level training, the college keeps coming in with proposals for things that can be done as well or better by the CBOs.

This relationship may be in the process of changing: the SDA and the college have just submitted a significantly different proposal to another state funding source RFP. It is included here, even though it is not JTPA, because it points to a subtle shift in the relationship. The proposal is unprecedented because it is a collaborative effort of the college and the

SDA that gives the college presumptive delivery status for any post secondary courses, with the SDA working with its usual providers on the more basic programs. The non-post secondary aspects of the program will be open to competitive bid from the SDA's customary vendors (and the college if it wants). Some sort of performance standards, as yet undetermined, will be used to maintain accountability for the community college as well as the other providers.

Institutional Perspectives: The Community College

The leadership of Barrington Community College shows a strong interest, even eagerness to be more involved with the JTPA system. They are motivated by the desire to provide well rounded service to their community, and also are facing a dramatic tightening of traditional sources of funding. One official made an impassioned speech at the SCOVE-sponsored meeting minimizing "the profound philosophical differences" between education and training and urging that his institution be seen as ready, willing, and able to deliver short term job training: "We run lots more here than just associate degree programs."

On the other hand, he and several other members of the College staff express a deep unhappiness with the current RFP process. Repeated references are made to the risks inherent in the process -- about how the paperwork of the RFP "kills your staff, especially if they don't get the award." These risks are seen as particularly high because of the view held by many of the college's leaders that there is an oversupply of training providers in the region and that the SDA tends to utilize the CBOs whenever possible. College officials worry that the oversupply situation

may become worse if the newly formed REBs become more active in providing training.

Instead, the Barrington staff urge a presumptive deliverer approach to coordination:

> It's a simple theory -- put incentives in place. The RFP process is often difficult. There is often a syndrome -- you spend staff time and then don't get the money -- a real disincentive. Instead, use the premise that certain institutions will be prime for particular tasks. Why go through all that [red tape] if there are agencies ready to provide service?

One college staff member speculates that some of the tensions in the past between the SDA and the community college may have been due to the perception that the college, when it became more active in seeking training and employment grants, was interested in muscling out the other community-based vendors -- "that we had the attitude that we could come in where services were being offered in a particular area and we might take it over. This may have led to a conscious or unconscious reluctance [on the part of the SDA] to fund us." He thinks things have improved considerably since the college has made clear that it is not trying to compete with any program that is already existing. He also notes that he believes the college has learned to be a better communicator with the SDA and the community, paving the way to a more cooperative relationship.

Institutional Perspectives: The Vocational Technical Schools

The officials at the regional vocational schools share the SDA staff's perception of little mutual contact. The Bakerston Area RVT superintendent, when asked about coordination, explains that "BARVT has never even tried.

That's not necessarily bad. We just haven't gone after any of that money." While a primary reason he gives is the conflict over timing of classes and available space, he adds several secondary reasons:

1- The RVTs feel the SDAs are more interested in specific training for a specific industry for a specific company than the schools are prepared to offer.

2- The typical SDA clientele is seen as a disincentive: "The School committee is not too wild about working with the clientele the SDA is perceived to work with. There are lots of bad memories from the CETA days, when there were fist fights and people coming in drunk. It had a lasting effect. You have 14-18 year old kids here. You don't know want to mix them with adult street people."

3- The SDA is seen as not very interested in the RVT: "They have their own service delivery organizations -- the community based organizations."

When asked about changes in enrollments and how they might affect willingness to run daytime programs, the superintendent acknowledges that, "Now that the population is down, the school committee might be more interested, but I am not pushing anything; I'll wait to see what happens with the REBs." He sums up his cautious, somewhat isolationist position with a comparison between his school and a castle:

> I have a castle, with a moat around it. I put the bridge down when I want; and take it up out of fear that I might lose what I have. I don't think its right but ... [he stops talking].

When pressed to make suggestions to improve the system, he makes clear that his reluctance is in working with the PIC/REB structure, not in

working with adult training. On the contrary, he echoes the community college request for presumptive delivery, urging that most of the training should be done through the vocational schools or the community colleges, that if schools were turned to automatically, it "might lend stability to the [adult training] operation." In a properly articulated system of RVTs and community colleges, he notes that students could start earning credits "even if they just came off the boat." He suggests that the newly formulated REB come in to the RVT at 2:30 and run programs "24 hours a day," but not under the current structure, under the aegis, instead, of the Division of Occupational Education.

Chester Barnett RVT appears even less involved with the JTPA system than BARVT. Its superintendent seems only vaguely aware of the SDA, the PIC and how the system works. He would not mind working more with JTPA but thinks it unlikely due to the bureaucratic turf issues -- "the subtle conflicts that are difficult to work around" that get in the way. Furthermore, due to budget constraints, Barnett's school committee just voted to end the small post-secondary operation that it offered during the day, making even less unlikely that there would be any interest in JTPA unless it was seen as a revenue producer.

Outstanding issues in the region

The historical tension between the SDA staff and the community college is noteworthy, relating to performance outcomes and the decisionmaking process for awarding contracts. The community college shares with one of

the RVTs a desire to be a part of the employment and training scene in the region, but on terms different from what the SDA has offered in the past. Both institutions want some form of a presumptive delivery system that could potentially challenge the autonomy of the SDA and its connections to the CBOs. This potential challenge to the SDA's role has not gone unnoticed-- one SDA staff member expresses his concern about this threat amidst the coming transitions to REBs,

> I want to be sure clients can be served and not batted around by providers who aren't clear about what they are doing. I'm talking about institutions -- providers should clarify roles as to what they can and cannot do. I get nervous when I hear from [other community colleges, outside of Bakerston SDA] that there is nothing [in employment and training] the community college cannot do.

Yet the two paths toward presumptive delivery taken by the community college and the RVT are very different. The Bakerston Area RVT superintendent sees his school's huge investment in equipment sitting idle after 2:30 at the same time that "people have their tongues hanging out for machinists" yet the bridge over his moat is clearly up to the JTPA system. His willingness to lower the drawbridge for training done under the auspices of Occupational Education points to a larger turf struggle. Barrington Community College leadership, on the other hand, is much more willing to work with the existing system, but to continue to lobby for a presumptive portion of the delivery of programs. It appears to have found the makings of a compromise which may one day apply to JTPA work as well, where it is the presumptive deliverer of post-secondary instruction, but the rest is left to the competitive process.

Cookville Service Delivery Area

Coordination Snapshot

The Massachusetts service delivery area referred to here as "Cookville" has one vocational school, "Clarkson" RVT, and one community college, "Charlton Falls." The school department of Cookville, the largest city within Cookville, is also involved with some PIC activities involving adult literacy. On the information sharing level, there is a high level of coordination. The SDA prides itself on the vide representation of educational institutions on its PIC and on a large and active Education subcommittee. A great deal of communication goes on, a great deal of "touching base" by the gregarious SDA director. Many of the key institutional leaders are long-time Cookville residents, who have known each other for years. Although the information-sharing level of coordination is reported to be good by most of the participants, underneath the collegiality there seems to be a strong sense of turf, with overtones of competition that probably mitigate against substantive long term planning. The superintendent of Cookville schools captures the flavor of this undertone: "The PIC includes good educational people ... and we are in constant contact; we don't wait for meetings to talk. But when there are funds available, we all scramble for them."

On the service delivery level, the SDA runs a skills training center for almost all of its JTPA training and support services. It contracts out some other (non-JTPA state) programs with the community college and also purchases some slots at Clarkson RVT. In addition, Cookville city school department runs an adult literacy program that is funded through the PIC

and housed in the skills center.

Institutional Perspectives: The SDA

While the SDA director feels that coordination can always be improved, he is basically satisfied with the status quo. He is very proud of the skills center he founded and runs, especially of the one-stop-shopping feature (intake, support services, training and placement under one roof) it provides for the clients. He is proud of its excellent placement rate and of having the lowest cost per JTPA job entrant of the state.

The SDA director sees his system as highly coordinated with educational providers in the region, in large part because of the active role they play in the PIC committees and despite the relative scarcity of programs that are contracted out. The SDA uses the educational providers as adjuncts, backup in case it cannot offer a client a particular training program, but the presumption is that, where possible, the skills center will do it. Most of the JTPA training that does get contracted out is on an individual referral basis and much of it is done with educational institutions outside the region. Each client develops an educational plan with one of the SDA's counselors and the SDA director expresses with pride his willingness to send a client anywhere, even out of state, to get the best possible training. "When we contract out," he reports, "we are doing what is best for the client -- not just filling empty slots in the community college."

Because the skills center is the presumptive deliverer, the director has been criticized, especially by Charlton Falls CC, for not contracting out. The principal reason he cites is cost: because of low overhead (space is provided for one dollar by the Cookville School Department), extensive

donation of equipment, a non-union work-force and an efficiently run operation, the SDA can provide a level of service they say cannot be matched at the price by any other provider. "If I RFPed out," says the director, "I would not be able to run as many programs."

Another impediment to coordination, at least with the community college, is a philosphically different attitude toward training and education. Charlton Falls, which, according to the SDA director, wants more of his business to replace its own resources which are drying up, does not share his belief in the JTPA approach to performance contracting and acceptable outcomes. Charlton Falls' avowed belief in longer-term education and its refusal to cooperate on some job placement activities creates another obstacle.

This is less of a problem with the RVT, which sells slots for about 25 trainees annually. A generally positive relationship experienced a brief problem recently when the SDA had to sanction the school with a "corrective action" due to low placement from a contracted program. This is being resolved in the context of a good personal relationship between the SDA director and the superintendent, who sits on the PIC. Contracts let by the SDA to the schools do not have financial penalties for non-performance of placement goals, but the director expects to add those stipulations in the coming year.

Institutional Perspectives: The Community College

The strongest perception of the community college leadership is that it is being excluded from a process in which it would like to play a

bigger role. Charlton Falls staff point to a nearby community college (in a different SDA) which is running six or seven hundred thousand dollars a year in programs for its PIC. In contrast, CFCC feels it only gets "thrown a couple of pieces of meat" by the Cookville SDA, and then often in response to its vocal complaints.

The major obstacle Charlton Falls staff see to getting more of the "action" is the heavy use of the skills center by the PIC. One staff member puts it bluntly: "Coordination is not good between Charlton Falls and the PIC because we are competing organizations." They fear that things will only get worse under the REB which will give the reconstituted PIC board greater authority over a wider range of programs which are more central to the college's operation.

A second obstacle, a relatively less significant one in the view of college staff, is the philosophical stance CFCC has taken on education and training. Unlike Aston Community College and Barrington Community College, which acknowledge the differences between short term training and longer term education, but are quite willing to provide training if that is what the PICs want, CFCC is trying to provide the instruction on its own terms, as education. Staff members express this as the desire to provide students with "basic skills for life, as opposed to getting them a job as quickly as possible." Moreover, they have successfully argued with funding sources that "it is a mistake to apply the same standards to education as to employment training, when they have different jobs to do and different roles." An example of their success in modifying the performance standards of a funding source is in a large scale program they have operated over the last few years for a state agency to provide Associate Degree programs for

several hundred targeted clients of the agency. This represents two significant changes from the customary funding procedures of the state agency. Not only has the agency supported educational programs considerably longer than it usually does, it has accepted performance based outcomes that specifically include attendance in further higher education as acceptable. More than 150 individuals have received associate degrees through the program, with a great many choosing to go on to further education.

The program has continued to receive funding from the state agency, but, as of this past year, the money no longer goes directly to the college, but is administered through the PIC. On one hand, this large grant, now run through the PIC, allows the SDA director to point to a contract-out rate of almost 40% and has also brought up a thorny question of from whence the PIC's administrative overhead for program monitoring was to come. But the change also highlights fundamental philosophical issues, tensions and different institutional perceptions which create obstacles to coordination, and underscores the college's fears of what is to come with the REBs. Although the notion that further education can be a positive outcome (which the college had negotiated with the state agency) was grandfathered in, there is clearly tension between the college and the PIC over the subject. The SDA director feels that anyone going through the program and not going on to further education should be placed in work, yet he has not gotten a response from the college when he asked for lists of those individuals. The college staff, on the other hand, feels as though they are being put under the pressure of a job placement accountability that they had arranged to avoid. The experience has heightened concerns on the part of

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college staff about the increased influence the newly constituted REB will have on the many existing programs the college offers.

Although they have been successful in getting state-level funders to support their long term educational strategy, Charlton Falls staff members realize they may have more difficulty influencing the Federal government and the JTPA system: "We may conclude, if we get access to the JTPA programs, that we wouldn't want it because of the performance-based requirements."

Institutional Perspectives: The Vocational Technical School

The balance between contracting out and in-house training of the SDA is seen as quite satisfactory to the regional vocational school superintendent. Very happy with the small involvement he has, he cites geography (the distance his school is from the urban center of the region) as the greatest obstacle to more. Furthermore, he reports no sense of competition, noting that the SDA only offers training in a relatively few skill areas compared to what is offered in his much larger, better endowed facility. The chief facilitator of the relationship, in his view, is the good communication with the PIC and the SDA director; he sits on the PIC board.

Outstanding Issues in the Region

Once again, the community college wants more from the JTPA system than it is getting. There is an even stronger sense of competition here than in Alistair or Bakerston because the SDA itself provides virtually all of its

needed services.

An interesting dichotomy shows up in Cookville between coordination on the adult education and training issues and coordination on youth-related issues, such as Commonwealth Futures. Cookville is cited by many state leaders as being one of the best examples of broad-based coordination among all the relevant parties in putting together the local Futures program. Yet this does not appear to carry over into the adult arenas. When questioned, respondents in the region do not seem to make connections between the high level of youth-related coordination and the relatively low levels of activity concerning adults.

Rather, Cookville remains a paradox in which there is a great deal of communication, personal contact, and a high level of information sharing going on in a region that also has deep-seated turf issues underlying many of the relationships.

Drumlin Service Delivery Area

Coordination Snapshot

The region referred to in this study as the "Drumlin Service Delivery Area" has both rural areas as well as two good-sized cities with high populations of ethnic minorities and welfare recipients. The two large cities, referred to here as "Drumlinton" and "Derry", have city vocational technical schools and community colleges in or near them. In addition, "Danforth" RVT is located some distance from either city. There is also a long-established Skills Center in Drumlin which, although not technically run by the SDA, is heavily utilized by it.

Like in Cookville, where there is also a skills center, there is very little coordination, and a keen sense of competition on the service delivery level. The SDA utilizes the Skills Center for virtually all its work and most of the educational providers feel closed out of a system in which they have a strong interest in participating. With the exception of a few dropout prevention programs in local high schools and a summer program with Derry City Vocational, and an occasional skills program (which the educators refer to as a "few bones thrown our way"), there is no consistent pattern of service delivery provision involvement of the educational institutions with the JTPA system.

Unlike Cookville, where close personal relationships and active involvement of educators on the PIC provides a modicum of coordination on the information-sharing level, in Drumlin there is virtually none. One community college president refers to coordination in the region as a "big silence: they [JTPA-related people] are in another empire, and they do not

mind not talking to us." A vocational technical superintendent, who has repeatedly requested a seat on the PIC, compares his reception at an open PIC meeting to that of the "proverbial skunk at a lawn party." Other representatives of educational institutions who do sit on the PIC, refer to it as "pretty much a rubber stamp," which does not draw on their input or work as an effective information coordinating mechanism.

Institutional Perspectives: The SDA

The SDA director reports that she turns to the Skills Center first both because she knows its quality will be good and because she has been dissatisfied with her attempts to work with the other educational providers. She feels the clients are well served by having all services under one roof. She has been repeatedly criticized for not utilizing the community colleges and vocational schools more and, troubled by the criticism, itemizes her difficulties with each type of institution.

She acknowledges that the community colleges are underutilized but cites the need for a fundamental change in the colleges' philosophy and a greater identification on their part with employment and training needs, particularly placement outcomes. She reports that she has "had people disappear in the framework of the community college" who have never been seen again in terms of placement, thus losing money in a placement-based performance system. Furthermore, she says that community college bids for programs do not seem to acknowledge the large investment the state has already made in facilities, equipment, etc. Community college proposals come in priced as high or higher than what it would cost the SDA director to run it through the

Skills Center.

The principal obstacle to coordination with the vocational schools is seen as the time conflict, where most JTPA clients prefer the same day time hours of the vocational schools' heaviest use. But she also stresses the negative experiences she has had with the few programs she has contracted out to some of the schools. She has been unhappy about performance standards, general program quality, and administrative problems associated with some contracted programs and considers these important disincentives to any further involvement.

She notes that some educational institutions have complained to various state authorities that she would not fund them, and sums up her defense of her almost exclusive use of the Skills Center by throwing the gauntlet back at their feet:

> We have tried, but the bottom line is that it is one thing [for educational providers] to turn around and say that "I haven't had access to the employment and training system." But if you have had access, and they're not funding you again, don't come back and say, "I haven't had access." You've got to ask yourself the question why haven't they come back to me. And the answer [is you] haven't delivered effective service. ...
>
> Those systems [vocational schools and community colleges] can't have it both ways. Those systems can't sit there and complain and not be put under the same scrutiny that I put any other vendor under.

Institutional Perspectives: The Community Colleges

The consistent theme of most of the educational providers in the Drumlin region is that while the Skills Center does a good job, the educational establishment is an untapped resource which can make a significant contribution to the employment and training arena from which it

has been excluded. Educators blame the SDA's reliance on a politically powerful and self-perpetuating Skills Center as the most important barrier to their involvement with JTPA.

Derry Community College officials report their frustration with a closed JTPA system which they feel they cannot trust. They cite an example where, as part of a grant application for another employment and training funding source, they were asked to get a reference and support letter from their PIC. The college official recounts that "I was hesitant to let people on the PIC know what I was doing. People thought I was paranoid." The tale he tells of his suspicions that an agency which ultimately was funded for a virtually identical proposal got access to his proposal while it was at the PIC is a significant indication of the breakdown of the perception of trust that is essential for even the lowest level of coordination.

Furthermore, Derry leaders feel that the message that the Drumlin SDA has gotten from the state is that, because of the existence of the Skills Center, there is no real need for coordination between the PIC and the educational institutions. When they look ahead to the future, they find "frightening" the expanded powers that PICs will have when they are transformed into REBs.

Derry Community College officials make a distinction between the job-focused training done by the Skills Center and the more "comprehensive" education that goes on at their campus. They argue that both functions are important in the employment and training mix and that they could serve an important function in an open, coordinated system. Barring some powerful state level intervention, however, they are not confident that they will

see any change.

Drumlin Community College leaders echo many of these concerns. They add to the list of barriers lack of trust between the personalities involved, mentioning how a relationship that showed some promise between them and a staff member at the SDA evaporated when he left: "We don't have any formal agreements that outlive personnel changes. They say 'A' and mean 'B' and they probably think the same of us." They also underscore the Derry Community College sentiments of being closed out, noting that even when they are permitted to bid on something, the paperwork frequently comes to them too late for them to respond. Furthermore, they feel as though the few programs that they were allowed to bid on and conduct were very successful. In sharp contrast to the quality and placement concerns of the SDA director, they attribute their not getting refunded to politics and the existence of the Skills Center.

Institutional Perspectives: The Vocational Technical Schools

Two out of three of the vocational school leaders in Drumlin also express a consistently high interest in being included in the JTPA system, along with a strong sense of being excluded. The Danforth RVT superintendent points out the abundant resources of his school, located in an underserved area of the region, but notes that the only time the SDA has initiated programs with him has been when a statewide RFP required it. He describes a geo-political discrimination, where the Drumlinton-based SDA does not properly support training activities in the rural sector near Danforth, and he urges some formula for equitable distribution be worked

out within the region. Another obstacle is a keen sense of competition with the presumed deliverer of the SDA, the Skills Center. This competition has been exacerbated by recent (hitherto unsuccessful) attempts of the Center to get access to Chapter 74 money (that is used to fund vocational schools).

The superintendent who oversees Derry City Vocational-Technical echoes the sense of competition and geographic exclusion from the Drumlinton-based SDA and Skills Center. He is disappointed the only program he gets to run is a summer youth program. He has stressed the possibilities of coordination on service delivery with JTPA throughout the process of building a new state of the art vocational school, but has gotten no response. He sadly concludes, "They should be coming to me to use the school. I don't have time to keep chasing them."

The only vocational school administration which seems satisfied with the current situation is the Drumlinton City Vocational School's. They express the feeling that it is totally appropriate for the SDA to use the Skills Center, and they are content to run a summer youth program and nothing more. The school leadership stands prepared to help out in the event some adult education program is needed that the Center cannot offer, but otherwise is quite happy with the current arrangement.

Outstanding Issues in the Region

There is almost unanimous interest by educational providers in a higher level of involvement with the JTPA system than they currently have. This

includes two out of three vocational schools and both community colleges. Derry Community College leaders note that when they started they were primarily a "typical liberal arts transfer" institution but their interest in skills training and working with adults has grown. They acknowledge that they are the "new kids on the block" but reemphasize their interest in a piece of the employment and training pie. Similarly, vocational schools which showed little or no interest in adult programs and those for the disadvantaged in the early 1970's, when the Skills Center was started, appear to have a new interest during an era of declining enrollment and resources.

There is a strong sense of competition, turf and politics in the region. The issue of fairness is repeatedly brought up due to what is perceived as a complete lock-up of JTPA programs by the Skills Center. Even though the Skills Center must officially bid on the RFPs sent out by the SDA, since it is city-owned and not directly run by the SDA (like in Cookville), the widespread perception is that the Center has an almost unbeatable advantage over everyone else. The fallout from this tension puts coordination at a standstill and creates an environment where there is little trust or even open exchange of information, as exemplified by the Derry Community College case.

There is an important and substantive conflict about perception of quality. Almost all the educational providers feel cut out and denied an opportunity to compete in a "closed system" -- locked up by the powerful role of the Skills Center. Each expresses something like the sentiments of the Danforth superintendent: "If we could get to the table, we are all set." But this stands in sharp distinction to the SDA director's view that other providers have had their opportunities and simply cannot deliver the quality the Skills Center can.

CHAPTER TWO

Analysis of How Massachusetts Institutions Make Coordination-Related Decisions

One of the important levels of analysis possible in a case study is the ability to examine how, on occasion, in dealing with similar environmental circumstances, different institutions make differing choices regarding coordination. For instance, in the region pseudonymously referred to as "Alistair", two apparently similar RVTs have very different approaches to coordination: Allendale continues to try, even with plenty of perceived barriers, to work with the JTPA system; Axelrod leaders feel as though there is nothing in it for their school. Another choice point which closely relates to coordination is the decision of an SDA to utilize a skills center or contract with independent vendors, including schools and colleges. This chapter explores these two decisionmaking processes more closely to illuminate how barriers and incentives get played out at the local level. The first part of the chapter makes an in-depth comparison between two neighboring regional vocational schools on whether incentives to coordination outweigh barriers; the second section compares all four SDAs on how they select among vendors generally and on the use of skills centers specifically.

Allendale and Axelrod: How Vocational Technical Schools Decide Whether it is Worth Trying to Coordinate.

Because of the generally accepted view of the increased time demands associated with coordinating with the JTPA system, the leadership of both

Axelrod and Allendale RVTs cite as a critical difference between them Allendale's Chip Martin (a pseudonym), a coordinator for external programs, who devotes about half his time to seeking funding from JTPA and elsewhere for a variety of special projects the school runs. While Axelrod has someone assigned to the task, it is considered lov priority on his long list of things to do because "there's nothing in it for us." Axelrod's superintendent blames the system with its high time costs and risks (of losing money on performance based contracts) for his different staffing priority:

> At Allendale, there is Chip Martin. In my school nobody really has the job to do -- and it won't get done. The risks don't justify [the staff time]. It's too risky. It's stupid. It's not as if we have extra money.

Martin's position has its roots in a federal grant in the late 1970's to develop community liaisons in a half dozen RVTs in the state. Many of these funded positions evolved into Special Education directors, and he sees himself as one of the only survivors of the grant still pursuing the original mission. The programs he runs do nothing toward generating funds to cover his position; in fact the school considers it an important distinction that there be no conflict of interest in his role. However, he cites four benefits of these externally funded programs (including JTPA programs) to Allendale: the youth served in summer programs get important exposure to the school; the adults served help fulfill Allendale's commitment to community service, which in turn enhances the school's position when budget time at town meeting comes; the staff is pleased by the diversity, the opportunity for extra pay and the infusion of money for supplies; and local industry is pleased at the production of more skilled workers.

Presumably all these benefits would be worth something to Axelrod as well. There appears to be more at work than the fact that one school has a liaison person and the other does not. It turns out that the same federal grant which got Martin's position started also was awarded to Axelrod, yet the school no longer has someone with that defined role. One possible reason for the difference may be enrollments. Axelrod's superintendent points out that his enrollment is solid and speculates that Allendale's greater decline is motivating them to greater flexibility. He also attributes some of the differences to different administrative structures. He has more department heads and fewer other administrators than Allendale, making it harder for him to free up a Chip Martin. The third factor he cites is organizational "culture" -- "a policy and attitude which comes from their [Allendale's] school committee and prior administrations of openness to outsiders." Others familiar with both schools confirm the "cultural" difference, noting the entrepreneurial attitude which seems to characterize Allendale's superintendent as well as Chip Martin.

Differences in attitude show up in how representatives of the two schools describe the same obstacles. For instance, both schools (indeed, all the educational providers in the region) refer to working with the JTPA as a "geographic nightmare." Because none of the regional schools is coterminous or wholly within the service delivery area, programs run with one PIC cannot include people from towns the RVT serves that are not in that service delivery area. Martin refers to this as "weird" and describes the extra effort he had to go through, two sets of forms, etc. to arrange joint funding. Axelrod's superintendent says he would have to get approval of a board of governors representing 12 local school committees: "I would

never get a program that served only four of my members through. They'd kick me out." Another Axelrod staffer adds, "someone else should absorb the nightmare."

Other obstacles, the risks of investing time in an RFP process with no guarantees, the inability to use grant money for equipment, the limitations on money used for match, and the restrictions on target populations all are seen as serious impediments to Allendale's Martin. In fact, JTPA funding is not his first choice, and he much prefers more flexible funding sources. Yet, if the circumstances are right, he will continue. The same obstacles cause Axelrod to simply walk away.

When asked how the system could be redesigned to make it worth his school's while to participate, Axelrod's superintendent suggests longer RFP turn-around time should be provided; maintenance and wear and tear on equipment should be allowable costs; a placement counselor should be built in and performance contracts be written so if a client has job offers but turns them down, the school is not penalized; and that some provision for overhead costs be arranged. However, he adds that even if these barriers were reduced, as long as he had sufficient regular enrollment, Axelrod was not about to get involved with JTPA.

Why SDAs Use Skills Centers and How They Select Among Vendors

Perhaps no one factor is so frequently cited by educational institutions as a greater obstacle to coordination than the existence of a skills center in a service delivery area. Approximately half of Massachusetts' SDAs (including two of the four SDA's in this study) run

skills centers directly or contract out to externally-run centers. The next section explores how and why these centers came to be utilized in the two SDAs that have them and why they are not in the other two. Furthermore, it examines the selection process by which SDAs choose from among their possible vendors of services.

Alistair SDA has never had a skills center and the SDA director does not believe in them. Bakerston was in the process of setting one up in the early JTPA days, but a new SDA director (the current director) put a stop to its construction. On the other hand, the first thing the Cookville SDA director did when he came in as the first CETA director was establish one. In Drumlin, the skills center was an established entity long before JTPA came on the scene.

Alistair's director feels that he can keep more up to date without the use of a skills center. He prefers to maintain maximum flexible response to the labor market, something that would be inhibited by an investment in equipment and training facility and staff. He prefers to use existing expertise, rather than set up his own and thinks the competition on an annual basis keeps the process fresh and responsive.

When deciding among possible vendors, the SDA staff evaluate them based on their prior experience, site accessibility (public transportation), type of training, handicapped accessibility and past placement performance. Alistair's director considers the use of community colleges an asset because it adds to the self-esteem of the students to be "going to college" and can be a boost to recruitment. Nonetheless, his RFPs are distributed very widely and the great majority do not go to educational

institutions.

Bakerston's director stopped construction of a budding skills center when he took the job, because he did not wish to be competing with the community agencies with which he works. He sees his role in the area more as one of a broker. He identifies the decision whether or not to run a skills center as a personal one, tied closely to the SDA director's philosophy.

> My decision was based on my own experience at the state level in economic affairs and on my knowledge of Bakerston. JTPA is here to assist the primary institutions, those with roots in the community. JTPA is a resource to help them do a better job, to help more people. We support existing organizations -- not always traditional organizations -- and that is the primary rationale for our existence.

He is supported in this philosophical approach by his PIC chairman, who criticizes a nearby SDA for running a skills centers: "We have one SDA actually delivering programs. If they do that, they can't really be their own watchdog."

Although the SDA has ruled out the presumptive use of a skills center, it has been accused of heavily favoring CBOs over schools and colleges. The SDA staff are proud of a long and successful relationship with CBOs which have "really delivered for us" and acknowledge that if all other things are equal, they will fund a CBO with a good track record rather than give it to a school just because it is a school. Because many of the CBOs in Bakerston are minority run, the director also notes that an increase in the contracts to educational institutions (which might result from a presumptive delivery arrangement) will have the effect of decreasing support and involvement of minority organizations and that these

calculations are factored in-- again, if all other things are equal.

Cookville's SDA director beams with pride when he describes how putting together a skills center was his first move back in 1983:

> I knew from my contacts that a school was available. There had been little training done under CETA and whatever was done was scattered around the city. The first thing I did was pulled together all the CETA skills operations and put them under one roof. We built a one-stop operation for the client. We planned it in the last few months of CETA, and as soon as JTPA came into action, we opened our doors and hit the ground running.

The running of a skills center is as clearly connected to his personal understanding of what JTPA is supposed to do as the opposite approach is in Bakerston for its director. And while the Bakerston director lists with pride the more than one hundred vendors (mostly CBOs) his SDA used last year, the Cookville director points to the wide range of programs offered by his center, conveniently, with high placement rates and low costs.

It is this high quality and low cost that keeps the director from straying far from his skills center in awarding contracts. He will in training areas the center cannot provide and he claims that if he were ever to be convinced that an educational institution or other vendor could match the center's cost and placement rate, he would use it.

If a new SDA director were to start next week in Drumlin with a no-skills center philosophy, he or she would not find it as easy as the Bakerston director did to close down the operation. In Drumlinton, the Skills Center is a given, a piece of the landscape for almost two decades with a strong reputation for quality training (gainsaid by none of its current competitors in the educational sector) and powerful political

connections. Many of the current leaders served their apprenticeships in the educational and employment and training field at the Center.

According to the current SDA director, the Center was set up in the early 1970's after the Department of Education and the Department of Labor found the existing vocational schools and community colleges "ill prepared to deal with disadvantaged adults." (an analysis which she says is still true today). When the educational institutions displayed no interest in accommodating this population during the day time, the Skills Center was set up, to be run through the Drumlin School Department, specifically to meet the employment and training needs of adults. The Skills Center survived the transition from MDTA to CETA and under CETA was given protected status as a "deliverer of demonstrated effectiveness," ensuring it access to funding. No such protective language exists in the JTPA legislation, and the 100,000 + square foot enterprise, which can train 400 students at a time, with a staff of 70, technically survives from grant to grant. However, its strong record of quality training (augmented, no doubt, by a powerful set of personal and political connections) ensure the Center of almost all of the JTPA money, even though it must bid on JTPA contracts like everyone else.

The SDA director makes clear her reasons for going with the Skills Center:

> I have received my criticism over the years for having turned first to the Skills Center. I don't know if it's justified or not -- maybe it's because my roots are there. I look first and say, "here is a system that was designed a number of years ago that continues to work, whose specific purpose is to deal with the client population that we deal with."
>
> My reaction will be to turn to that system. Now there are areas in which that system doesn't have an option. I will then turn to other systems. Quite candidly, I have not

> been -- my personal opinion -- I have not been as satisfied in the delivery of service from the community colleges or some of the vocational schools.

This chapter has highlighted how individual attitudes and institutional "cultures" might interact with environmental factors to help explain why patterns of coordination differ from one region to the next, and why different approaches to it exist in similar schools in the same region. Some differences have devolved to personal choice and value systems; other aspects of the problem are more structural in nature. The next chapter addresses the "leverage points" of the system -- those places that the participants in the study have suggested changes might be made to influence the personal decisions and cost/benefit analyses of the players to promote coordination. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 4) will address some of the structural issues involved that go beyond personalities and attitudes.

CHAPTER THREE

Recommendations from the Field on How to Improve Coordination

The following suggestions for improving coordination were made by the administrators and staff members of the schools, colleges and SDAs in the four regions studied for this report. They represent the comments of front-line practitioners who have to, on a regular basis, make the kind of decisions described in Chapter 2 about in what coordination-related activities their institutions will or will not participate. The suggestions they could make about what changes to the system would improve their institution's assessments of the costs and benefits of coordination are organized by the three levels at which the change could be implemented: local (at the institutional level), regional, and state-wide.

Local

Because it is widely recognized by all participants that coordination takes considerably more staff time, a frequent suggestion is the creation of an external affairs or "coordination coordinator" position at each SDA and educational institution. The existence of such a person is considered a major reason for the different approaches of Axelrod and Allendale RVTs to coordination (see above, Chapter 2). One community college administrator sums it up:

> You need one-to-one communication even if you get the best [coordination] structures in place. One person from each institution [should] be designated for coordination activities. To the extent that institutions have someone in that role, they have done it. If not, coordination has been lacking.

Although there is a strong consensus across the sites on the importance of a designated coordinator, the question remains as to where the money will come from to pay for the position. The college president cited above argues that it should come from the state; one RVT superintendent says that it should be built in as some excess into each JTPA grant; another says that external contracting is an important part of what a school does and should be supported as such. Another RVT superintendent, who also feels that such a person can play a critical role in selling slots to JTPA, maintains:

> Unless you can assign a leader in each school -- hire a person to drag customers in -- and have him battle with the funding sources -- If you don't hire such a person, you will either give up [seeking coordination] or have to give something else up.

Since coordination, as slot-selling, is an entrepreneurial affair, the superintendent notes that his coordinator can more than earn his salary by bringing in bodies (and money) into the school.

Regional

Two related proposals are made by respondents to be implemented at the regional level. One SDA director suggests making technical assistance regionally available to schools and colleges interested in getting involved with JTPA.

A broader suggestion is made in several regions for a full-time educational coordinator who would be hired at the regional level. Although, pursuant to a memo of understanding between Massachusetts' Department of Employment Training (DET) and Department of Education (DOE), there is supposed to be a coordinator on the DOE payroll for just this activity, in

no case is that person seen as very effective in promoting coordination in the adult training field. There are several reasons which might explain why in several of the regions, respondents urge creation of a regional coordinator when one in fact already exists.

The first is lack of clarity over the DOE person's job description. In the past, the focus of the job was coordination on the Commonwealth Futures youth program, and it is only since Fall of 1988 that the job has more clearly included adult training and education. A typical response when someone was asked about the role of the DOE person in promoting coordination is, "I know her. She does a good job with Commonwealth Futures. I didn't know she was supposed to be involved in employment and training." The DOE coordinators themselves refer to involvement with coordination on adult issues as "virgin territory" and that it is a new and not clearly designated part of their jobs:

> By and large we have the youth coordination in place. The adult education is a grayer area. ... I participate in the PIC meetings and meet regularly with [SDA director and staff member] but we are still dancing around what I will actually do -- where I have things to offer, and they are looking at me to see what I can do.

Another problem which may or may not be related to the start-up phase of this DOE involvement is what one community college official sees as the low priority given by DOE for this activity:

> Yes I know her. She doesn't act as a coordinator between the PICs and the community colleges that I can see. She's an educational specialist at DOE who monitors grants. We've kept her informed of our problems, but get no comment back. The DOE loads her with so many other things, it's hard to get through.

Other comments, which go beyond various positive or negative views of the personalities of the individuals involved, refer to the structural

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problem of having the Massachusetts DOE appoint a regional coordinator. The preferred solution, frequently suggested, is for a coordinator to be chosen by the institutions in the region and accountable to them, not to any of the state bureaucracies. Repeatedly, the request comes for someone who could be seen as neutral. A community college staff member sums up this view when asked what contribution the DOE person made to coordination in the region:

> I like the idea of helping to choose someone who is accountable to [local SDA director] and the staff of the REB. [But the present position is a] waste. The problem is with the individual and who is accountable. ... The person has to be accountable to someplace other than DOE. There are some stuck in the mud people over there.

Others affirm, in that and other regions, the importance of any regional coordinator being seen as neutral.

State

State-level suggestions range from the practical, such as suggesting standardized paperwork and reporting for different sources of SDA funding, to angry suggestions that the state "get its act together" regarding coordination before expecting the regions to.

At the practical end, the state is urged to "absorb the geographical nightmare" caused by the differing boundaries of SDAs and RVTs or community colleges. For example, geography creates problems for Aston Community College when it runs a JTPA-sponsored course for Alistair SDA and has to turn away JTPA-eligible clients who live in the next town. The non-overlap of service areas is reported as a major barrier by several other institutions, whose governance structure is such that it is extremely difficult to set up a program which serves just a part of the school's geographic constituency. One

suggestion is to streamline the sale of slots into a contracted JTPA program. So if Aston Community College has vacancies in a program it is running for Alistair SDA, a client from another SDA could simply mention the program to her local SDA and have them buy her a slot from Alistair for the per student cost. If this became standard and simple, argue its proponents, everyone would benefit: Alistair SDA would save money it might have lost on vacant seats; the neighboring SDA would get a simple and cost-effective placement in a program it knew had already been approved for JTPA funding. The client would be well served, even if she lived on the wrong side of a town line, and the college would be able to better serve all of its constituents.

A less-ambitious approach to deal with the same problem (since people express serious doubts that the SDAs could coordinate well enough to make the above program work) is to standardize the paperwork required by the SDAs. Some schools and colleges have attempted to seek joint funding from two SDAs. They find they need to generate two entire sets of proposals, report forms and the like and urge the state to mandate a standardization. One DOE regional coordinator points out how this might be possible, but indicates her experience tells her that these things take plenty of time:

> Three years ago we talked about making one grant form to use in [a particular program which required separate forms, due to different agencies involved]. Two years ago, we got it down to attachments -- still two forms but they could be clipped together. This year -- hopefully -- we're going to make it on one document -- but I can't make any commitment.

Another bureaucratic problem which several respondents address is the inadequate turn-around time on RFPs the educational institutions often have. State-level funders are encouraged to post RFP deadlines a year in

advance to provide earlier announcement of upcoming priorities. Similarly, some suggestions are made at the regional level for SDAs to give more notice and provide more turn-around time.

The one suggestion upon which there appears to be something close to consensus is that Massachusetts state agencies should build in inter-institutional coordination as a requirement, or at least give "bonus points" for it, in their state-wide competitive RFPs. Several community college and vocational leaders express this view, with one saying that it would be the only way he could ever expect to get a chance to run programs for the SDA. Interestingly enough, in separate interviews, his SDA director agrees:

> You can get the systems closer to each other by putting a pot of money out there -- but don't take it from each one -- make it a separate pot. And let those areas say how we can get closer together on program delivery, how we can make better uses of our facilities. Have a review committee at the state that goes thumbs up or down on what comes out.

The SDA director goes on to talk about how the state should leverage coordination through money for programs, not through money for coordinators,

> No one wants some guy or lady up there preaching about coordination. Don't fund a [expletive] position to talk about coordination. People are going to laugh at him. You fund programs.
>
> You say to this SDA, "Here's X amount of money to fund programs that wouldn't have been funded. But this is what has to happen -- you've got to bring in your higher education, your vocational schools, and your employment and training [agencies] and you have to identify a program structure that will use one or several of these to deliver."

Several respondents question the extent to which the Perkins-associated

restrictions on matching money and JTPA performance outcomes are federal or state requirements. They urge the state to not do anything to make the onerous JTPA or Perkins requirements any more restrictive.

At a more negative level, the sincerity and effectiveness of Massachusetts state-level system in promoting coordination were frequently challenged. As noted in the next chapter, this viewpoint stands as a marked contrast to the 1987 study, in which initiatives by the governor and state-level bureaucracies toward coordination were considered strong enablers to coordination at the regional level. The difference may be at least partially due to the different levels of state figures asked about in the two studies. The 1987 study specifically asked about the role of the Governor and the heads of organizations like the DOE; the current study was more open-ended, and respondents chose to talk about the entire gamut of state bureaucrats and officials.

Perhaps the mildest comment in this category has to do with the perceived failure of the state to provide a clear pro-coordination message. It is offered by a community college official in Drumlin complaining about the mixed messages the state sends:

> You hear when you go to these [state] meetings and conferences: "Get involved with your PIC." When [at one meeting at the State House] I asked "What for? If we're not going to get any opportunity to do any training? It all goes to the [Drumlin Skills Center]."
>
> The state representative said, "Oh, you're from Drumlin. You have the Skills Center there. In that case, it's alright [not to try to coordinate]. They're doing a good job."

Other local level comments about state level barriers to coordination

center on three areas: the political nature of the changes in employment training in general and a DET/DOE turf struggle in particular; general frustration with the state's lack of consistent follow-through on other issues (and thus presumably coordination); and concerns about the future -- what coordination will mean as the REBs get formulated in a continuing era of fiscal austerity.

One superintendent reflects the remarkably common distrust of the state by local institutional leaders when he attributes the lack of a clear solution for the "training puzzle" of Massachusetts to the state bureaucrats' "grab for power." "The state level is political," he adds, it is "not geared for training." Another superintendent is even blunter and more willing to point a finger at turf struggles between DET and DOE:

> The biggest barrier [to coordination] is at the state level. State level policy-makers are still circling each other like St. Bernards. ... There is still a jockeying on the state level to make sure its the job-training DET-type people who run everything.

He goes on to argue that the only state-wide agency to consistently promote coordination is the State Council on Vocational Education and that the lack of a consistent state policy on coordination leads to confusion and high variation in coordination levels and policies throughout the regions of the state.

Perhaps the most sympathetic comment on the issues between DET and DOE is made by one of the DOE regional people who refers to the conflict as being between "organizational cultures." She notes that "DOE has good process-oriented ways of dealing with people, and DET, less process

oriented but best at product, needed to understand that some things took time." The problem, she adds, is to figure out "how to make them get the best of both."

An SDA staff member who is less patient with the lack of clear policy coming from these two bureaucracies angrily urges the "state to come out of its ivory tower where people talk about how 'we have our philosophical differences' and sit downstairs here and watch the people [clients] coming in."

Many of the respondents take the opportunity to point out how previous disappointments with state follow-through on new ideas or policies make them wary of jumping on any coordination bandwagon. In each region, there is at least one tale told by an educator who had been active on a committee to work at the state level for change and, after months or years of meetings, saw nothing come of it. These experiences are reported to be very damaging to people's energy and commitment. For instance, a school leader cites a highly coordinated multi-agency literacy proposal that was put together in his region. It involved a great deal of work, raised people's expectations and fell apart when the state did not appropriate the money: "Now we have to repair some fences here."

Others address the cyclical and sometimes faddish nature of state-wide pushes for something like coordination. One veteran RVT superintendent drew laughs all around at the SCOVE sponsored meeting in his region by his reflections on history:

> I'm glad to see young people here at the table. If history continues to repeat itself, they will get to see this again. ... I'll be back for the next series of meetings, then the next, then I'll retire.

A final concern is about money. Although several participants could see that coordination might ultimately save the state money, virtually all of them feel that at the institutional level, coordination requires more money, in terms of staff time and effort. Consequently, there is tension and a widespread fear that a push toward coordination would come without additional funds or, worse, with even lower levels of funding than are available now. The newly formulated Regional Employment Boards, which are seen as tied to a move toward greater coordination, have inspired even greater concern. Unlike the PICs, whose JTPA activities have been essentially peripheral to the main mission of any of the educational providers, the expanded REBs, with their somewhat ambiguous jurisdictional area, have engendered fear that institutions might be forced to be involved in coordination on "employment-related" programs which are more central to the responsibilities of the educational system. One vocational school leader captures this sentiment in his reaction to the formation of the REBs with their wider jurisdiction than the PICs: "I would have done the same thing they did, because it makes sense [on the state level]. As a superintendent, I don't like it."

Just as the notion is widespread that coordination can be fostered best through incentive funding, so is the fear that the state will encourage coordination by withholding or redirecting dollars. This fear is expressed in the words of an SDA director, who notes that even the closest of personal contacts is not enough to promote coordination, because people get into their own "realms":

The dimensional question you want to ask is how you get some of the individuals who are responsible for vocational institutions, for community colleges, and for employment and training -- they all have their own realms and they're busy, day in and day out. How do you get these orbs to touch so they can better coordinate delivery?

The answer is really simple. Give us some money to do it with. You put money there and what will happen is you will get [coordination]. And <u>don't take the money from each one.</u> That's the standard answer today -- I'll take a little from employment and training, from the schools -- then you just [get everyone annoyed and they will say:] "What are you guys doing to us? You're taking our money and telling us to sit down at the table [with other institutions] and come up with a plan on how to use it. I already know how to use it. I don't have enough money to run my own operation. It's my money and I don't have enough of it."

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings About Coordination from Across the Sites

This chapter summarizes the findings from this study and provides a short comparison with some related findings from the 1987 study. The first point of comparison deals briefly with the coordination of information-sharing activities. The second, longer section deals with issues about service delivery and attitudes held by the participants toward greater involvement in coordinating the JTPA and the vocational education/ community college systems.

When the level of coordination desired by all sectors in the 1987 study is compared to observations made in the four SDAs studied here, only one, Cookville, has the level of dialogue and inclusion of all the players which approximates that standard. (This is undoubtedly at least partially a reflection of the sampling necessary to winnow 15 SDAs down to the four that were studied. With SDAs chosen to reflect diversity on a number of issues (see Appendix for details), it is entirely possible that SDAs which were not included match or exceed the coordination levels discussed in this report.)

The activities described as "desirable" in 1987 included sharing of labor market information, reciprocal referral procedures, and joint or reciprocal technical assistance, all of which seem to occur on a regular basis in Cookville. Alistair is certainly an "open" JTPA system, with good involvement in information-sharing with some of its educational

institutions. But the fact that Aston Community College perceives itself as excluded from the various kinds of information it has sought makes this high level of information less consistent a pattern. Bakerston is more of a mix, where some good personal relationships seem to be improving planning coordination, but where people in the region have infrequently taken the opportunity to meet and to plan and to openly share information. Finally, there is the "big silence" and high levels of distrust and turf protection of Drumlin which mitigate against any attempts at an information-sharing level of coordination there.

When the barriers and incentives to greater involvement in the service delivery level of coordination cited in the 1987 study are compared to those reported here, a number of factors are still the same, but a few new patterns emerge. Some of the differences may be due to the different methodology, which allows in-depth looks at selected areas, without the problem of non-response that affected the 1987 survey; others may be due to the passing of two years of political developments like the formation of the Regional Employment Boards, which have drawn attention to the coordination issue. Furthermore, the drastic change in the fiscal condition of the state has had serious repercussions for the resources available for programs. The active role of the legislature in investigating potential duplication of services and promoting coordination through fiscal measures is also an important factor in the current climate. Furthermore, a different level of analysis can be applied to the data, since responses from educational providers can be paired with those of the appropriate SDA.

Among the barriers, factors relating to turf and the difficulties of the RFP process continue to be important. The use of a skills center by the SDA which, as a local issue, gets somewhat lost in the aggregation of data in 1987, stands out more prominently in 1989. Another factor which shows up more clearly in 1989 due to disaggregation of the data is the "geographic nightmare" described in Alistair where, because of the non-overlap of districts between an RVT and an SDA, the school is in the unenviable position of trying to mount a program for which only some of its constituent towns are eligible.

Another barrier that appears in clearer focus in 1989 due to the case-level reporting of the findings is the role that performance contracting plays. In Alistair, where the SDA writes contracts which penalize schools for poor placement, the SDA director reports that this is not a problem for the educational providers, yet each of the RVTs (including one which had never done anything with JTPA, but had just heard about performance contracts) and one of the community colleges consider it a barrier. The importance of performance contracting takes on a different twist in the three other regions studied, in part because of the different attitudes held by SDA staff and educators on how positively a client termination into further education can be considered. Past experiences with poor performance on job placement from educational providers are considered inhibiting factors by staff members of each of these three SDAs yet none of the ten educational institutions in their regions consider their own performance on job placement a problem. This divergence points to an important perceptual mismatch about quality of service delivery that is only hinted at in the 1987 study.

The current study also highlights different incentives to coordination. A noticeably more prominent incentive in 1989, at least on the part of the educational providers, is the financial pressure caused by decreasing enrollments (especially in the vocational schools) and state and/or local funding cutbacks. Conspicuously missing from the data in this study is evidence of the encouragement given to coordination by the policies and examples set by the state. Although local leaders in both 1987 and 1989 look to the state for leadership in promoting coordination, the higher level of optimism in 1987 about the potential for this role has been replaced by a pervasive sense of disappointment, best summed up by the comment of an SDA director when asked who the key players to promote coordination are in his region:

> Don't pass over the state level. Coordination is thrown in [as a local matter] to cover up the sins at the state level. It [the problem of coordination in the region] really reflects on the lack of consensus at the state level.

Further discussion of the state role, or lack thereof, in promoting coordination has already been noted in Chapter 3.

Several other patterns about attitudes toward coordination stand out when categorized by institution across the four sites. A summary of the barriers, incentives, and satisfaction levels with the present system is presented in Table 1. The data are presented by institutional type, with the vocational schools listed together, followed by the community colleges and then the SDAs. Next to each institution's pseudonym are a few key words which characterize the views of its leadership toward the (Column 2) barriers and (Column 3) incentives of coordination. The fourth column is a

summary of "Overall Interest." This notes where each institution stands on the notion of trying to be involved in coordinated program delivery with the other sector, once the costs and benefits have been weighed and the barriers and incentives have been analyzed. Column 5 lists the aggregate satisfaction level of each set of institutional leaders with the status quo and the last column reports the number of contracted programs in which each institution is involved. ("SYP" stands for summer youth program.)

Table 1: Barriers, incentives, and interest level in coordination,

by institutional type

Name	Barriers	Incentives	Overall Interest	Satisfied with status quo?	# of contracts
Vocational Technical Schools (Regional and City)					
Allendale	RFP Paperwork "geog. nightmare" perf. contract	expose youth to RVT serve adults, industry; money for supplies and staff overtime	Barriers high but will keep trying	No	1
Axelrod	RFP Paperwork "geog nightmare" unreimbursed costs perf.contract loss	not sufficient to outweigh costs	No; only if barriers down, incentives up	No	0
Adams	RFP system Perf. contracts	declining enrollments	Yes, if can sell slots, no to RFP system	No	slots
BARVT	time conflict clientele mix SDA has CBOs	no incentives under present system; might be more interested if enrollment declines	Yes, if run under Occup. Education	No	0
Barnett	turf issues bureaucracies	general desire to serve community	Low	Yes	0
Clarkson	geography (cannot do more since far away)	good for community	Yes	Yes	2
Drumlinton	skills center does needed trng	will be involved if needed	Low, ok if skills center does it	Yes	1 SYP
Derry	geog. discrimination; skills center does it	declining enrollments would like to do more--better serve part of county	High int. feel left out	No	1 SYP
Danforth	geog. discrimination, skills center does it	would like to do more--better serve part of county	High int. feel left out	No	0

Barriers, incentives, interest level and satisfaction (cont'd)

Name	Barriers	Incentives	Overall Interest	Satisfied with status quo?	# of contracts
Community Colleges					
Arlington	paperwork "geog. nightmare"	coordination makes public sector look good; run more diverse programs	Barriers high but will keep trying	No	1
Aston	paperwork cash flow poor information	enables offering programs which would have no other funding	High, despite barriers, want more; feel left out	No	3
Barrington	RFP process	better serve community in era of tight resources	High, want more involvement; presumptive deliverer	No, but getting better	1
Charlton F.	diff philosophy use of skill center	provide services during fiscal austerity	High, feel left out	No	0
Drumlin	diff philosophy use of skill center delay in RFP info lack of trust	provide range of services utilize facility	High, feel left out	No	0
Derry	fiefdoms use of skill center geog. discrimination	provide services during fiscal austerity, for geog. area	High, feel left out	No	0
The SDAs					
Alistair	negative attitudes of others	cost effective, keeps up to date good image for students	Yes	Yes	5
Bakerston	perf. outcomes ties to CBOs	provide services, like post-secondary, which others cannot provide	Mixed	Yes	1
Cook	perf. outcomes philosophy higher costs have skills center	utilize as adjunct, for programs skills center does not offer	Low	Yes	1
Drumlin	Quality, costs perf. outcomes geog. (distance to RVT)		No	Yes	2 SYPs

Perhaps the most profound finding that stands out in the aggregated data is the different levels of satisfaction with the current system between most of the educational providers and the staff of the SDAs themselves.

Twelve out of 15 educational institutions express substantial dissatisfactions with the current arrangement (although one of these, Barrington Community College, sees a brighter future now that relationships with the SDA are improving). Of these, four (Arlington CC, Allendale RVT, Aston CC, and Barrington CC) are delivering programs for the JTPA system and, despite what are seen as serious obstacles, expect to continue to try to do so. Another, Adams RVT, has given up on the RFP process and is selling slots to one SDA and trying to convince other SDAs to adopt the approach. Two other institutions unhappy with the status quo have given up, or never really joined the system -- both Bakerston Area RVT and Axelrod would only be interested in working with JTPA if major overhauls are made in how it is run (and Axelrod only if pushed by further declines in enrollment). Finally, the remaining five dissatisfied institutions have a high interest in participating with JTPA but feel closed out.

The three educational institutions that report a satisfaction with the current system are vocational schools, one of which, Clarkson, has a moderately high level of involvement in the adult program offerings of the SDA, another, Drumlinton City Vocational is only involved in a summer youth offering, and the third, Barnett is not involved at all.

The perception of many educational providers in being excluded is even more dramatic when just the community colleges are considered. Five of the six community colleges studied are interested in playing a greater role with the

JTPA system than they feel they are being allowed to play. Each, to some extent, feels excluded, by a time consuming and often disappointing RFP process, by getting too little information about SDA needs too late, or by not even being allowed to apply for JTPA funds because of the SDA's use of a skills center.

At the other end of the spectrum, all four SDAs are essentially satisfied with the status quo. This is an unsurprising finding since, within certain parameters, they have been the architects and builders of the current regional systems for delivery of JTPA services. There are frustrations, such as Alistair's director's feeling that more of the regional and city vocational schools could be submitting proposals, or the Bakerston SDA staff member who wishes Barrington Community College would submit proposals for higher level instruction or that educational institutions would take a bigger role in the SDA's open planning process. There are also some expressed dissatisfactions with the external job placement pressure put on the SDAs by Federal JTPA regulations which the SDAs have to pass along to their service providers. Nevertheless, these are relatively minor and it appears that, generally, the SDAs have a more passive interest in greater coordination than the educational institutions.

The final chapter draws on these findings and follows up on some of these important differences in perception between the SDAs and the educational providers. The chapter develops a conceptual framework about the structural problems inherent in promoting coordination and concludes with some questions which should be asked as part of a review of the options for influencing change.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions about the Nature of Coordination: Questions to be Considered for the Future

The findings reported in Chapter 4 indicate a potentially important imbalance in terms of the desire for increasing some types of coordination between the SDAs and many of the educational providers. Representatives of both sectors express enthusiasm and support for the general notion of coordination, and in many regions display high levels of information-sharing and good coordination on some activities, like Summer Youth Programs. However, different views emerge about the extent and type of coordination that should take place on program delivery for adults. The SDAs seem generally content with current levels of program delivery coordination while many of the educational institutions appear eager to play a greater role.

This final chapter focuses on this program delivery aspect of coordination. It pays less attention to the information-sharing and other aspects of coordination that are less controversial or seem to be more firmly in place. It picks up on the divergent views of SDA staffers and educators on the role the secondary and post-secondary vocational education system should play in the actual delivery of instruction for SDA-run projects.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part draws on the findings of this study to make three conceptual observations about the relationship between the educational institutions and the JTPA system pertaining to the question of who delivers service. The second section springboards from this conceptual framework to pose some questions which may be useful in stimulating

discussion about any overall system redesign or recommendations to promote greater coordination.

One comment on the generalizability of these findings is in order here. These findings are based on relationships in just four of the fifteen SDAs in the Commonwealth. Although these four were deliberately chosen to be representative of the range of coordination models [see Appendix I for details], it is quite possible that other regions have greater (or lower) levels of involvement of the educational institutions in delivery of services for the SDAs. Nonetheless, the fact that the pattern of divergent attitudes toward the involvement of the vocational education system in service delivery for the SDAs appears, to some degree, in all four regions studied suggests the strong possibility that similar patterns may exist in other regions.

A Conceptual View of Coordination Between Educational Institutions and the Employment and Training System

The divergence between the SDAs and the educational providers in their desire to coordinate on program delivery suggests some underlying structural considerations which should be addressed prior to any discussions about recommendations to improve coordination. For instance, virtually all the "Recommendations from the Field on How to Improve Coordination" reported in Chapter 3 -- identification of one individual to be responsible for coordination activities at each institution, employment of "neutral" coordinators for each region to promote dialogue, streamlining of the geographic and bureaucratic obstacles -- hinge upon the agreement of all parties that coordination of program delivery is desirable. If, on the other

hand, the SDAs are satisfied using community based organizations, or a mix of providers which happens to include some educational institutions, or a skills center, then bureaucratic streamlining and personal networking, while important, are not enough to achieve fully coordinated patterns of service delivery.

The region referred to in this report by the pseudonym "Cookville" serves as a case in point. Most of the key institutional leaders, the Cookville superintendent, Charlton Falls Community College's president, the SDA director, and many of the staff members are long-time area residents who have known each other for years and maintain strong professional ties on the PIC. All the institutions are in one relatively defined region (avoiding the problem of "geographic nightmares" of non-overlapping boundaries), and there are relatively few complaints about bureaucratic obstructions. Nonetheless, virtually all the JTPA training is done in-house by the SDA-run skills center.

The three observations which follow pertain to the relationships between educational institutions and SDAs and may provide a useful conceptual framework for a discussion on improvement of coordination on service delivery.

1- <u>The underlying demographic changes and financial pressures affecting educational institutions increase their interest in JTPA and other external funding sources.</u>

Reductions in traditional-aged students have been hitting the vocational schools and community colleges and, not surprisingly, increasing their interests in serving other, older populations to help maintain themselves at their current operating levels. The superintendent of Samuel Adams RVT quoted earlier puts it bluntly, due, undoubtedly to the particularly sharp enrollment declines experienced at the school:

> With the demographics as they are, if vocational schools do not serve older clients, for the next five to six years at least, there will have to be major cutbacks. If I can fill seats, I don't have to close programs.

While the relatively small amounts of money involved in contracts with the SDAs cannot "support" educational institutions or replace declines in regular school budgets, they can help to keep marginal programs open. Another important function the SDA money can serve is in supporting new programs. Other cutbacks in funding increase the need of the educational providers for outside sources of funding, especially for new programs which might not be able to get support from an institution's regular budget. This is most clearly brought out by the leadership of Aston Community College which puts itself through all kinds of hoops to meet the requirements of a JTPA system with which it is very unhappy, simply because without it, the college cannot run programs for which it sees a student need. An administrator explains why lower level program directors were told that dropping their JTPA programs because of the problems of dealing with the SDA was an "unacceptable solution,"

> I know it [the scale of Aston's JTPA programs] is small potatoes, but one program just got a national award. These are high-caliber offerings we cannot do without outside funding. They provide service to people and there are no other sources of flexible funding.

2- <u>The relationship between the SDAs and the educational institutions is most akin to that between a buyer and a seller.</u>

Coordination, insofar as it refers to service delivery, is not being played out on a level playing field between two comparable sets of state agencies. One organization has the discretionary money and a wide flexibility in whom it hires to provide services. The other one has to compete, along with a myriad of other vendors, for funds channeled through the SDAs. Several SDA directors refer to lengthy mailing lists for RFPs including CBOs, all kinds of public and

private secondary, post-secondary and adult schools, institutes, colleges, and universities. Even vendors from out-of-state are interested in bidding.

SDAs certainly have their own problems, particularly as unemployment drops and their funds are reduced at the same time that they are trying to serve those who are harder to get into the work-force. And, as noted earlier, they remain under the external pressure of JTPA to meet job placement goals. But finding vendors for their training dollars is not one of their problems. They still have the upper hand in the relationship with educational institutions, which generally need the SDAs more as a source of funding for marginal programs than the SDAs need the educators as service providers. With a multiplicity of vendors interested in their money, the SDAs usually have far more options for service providers than educational institutions have for outside funders.

One of the SDA's options, of course, is the use of a skills center or some other form of direct provision of services. Properly run skills centers may well be, as some SDA directors claim, the most effective and efficient vehicle for short-term job preparation in the state. But this point should not obscure the fact that the political, social, and economic investments SDAs make in skills centers stand as serious deterrents to coordination between the JTPA system and educational providers. Furthermore, as long as the SDAs have skills centers (or a competent complement of CBOs or other outside vendors) they basically do not have to deal with vocational schools and community colleges, unless they want to, or are pressured to by state or local officials.

3- <u>In some cases, the SDAs are dissatisfied with the services provided by the educational institutions and the schools and colleges may not even know it, partially due to a mismatch between the missions of the two systems.</u>

A finding that is hinted at in the 1987 study and verified here concerns the differing perceptions of the quality and performance outcomes of programs run by educational institutions for the SDAs. Although each of the SDAs studied describe high levels of satisfaction with many of the programs delivered for them by educational institutions, in three out of the four SDAs there is also some doubt, usually based on past performance, about how well the educational providers will deliver on the performance-based job placements which are so important to JTPA. The extent to which this dissatisfaction or concern is felt varies by region, but the issue shows up as "philosophical differences" in Cookville; as concerns about lack of focus and follow-through performance in job placement in Bakerston, and as more direct criticism of quality and performance in Drumlin.

Particularly noteworthy, however, is that none of the educational providers consider program quality or lack of focus on job placement performance as an obstacle to further coordination with JTPA. Even in Drumlin, where the dissatisfaction of the SDA director with some of the programs she has run with educational institutions in the past is the sharpest, there is no indication from the schools or colleges that their performance has been seen as any part of the problem.

This difference of perception is partly due (in Drumlin, for instance) to a lack of good communication, but in a broader sense it can be attributed to a fundamental mismatch between the goals of the JTPA system and the educational system. Charlton Falls Community College president makes this point:

> I [am familiar with] the Manpower Development Training Act and the PIC is a better model. But there is an inherent philosophical difference between what PICs want to do, and have to do, and what we in education are trying to do. We try to educate the whole person, as corny as that may seem. ...

> My own bias is that, for an individual's welfare, the best way is education. No doubt people want jobs, but I have problems with quick solutions. ... I don't know if we are trying to make a fit between two organizations that have inherently different approaches. The PIC in [Cookville] does an excellent job. We stand willing to cooperate but, ultimately, education is the only way to change people's lives fundamentally.

In some cases this difference in goals is reflected in the personal philosophical approaches of SDA staff members who tend to favor short-term training over the longer-term approach of the educators. Yet, even when it is not reflective of their personal philosophy, several SDA staffers make a point of emphasizing how the external constraints put on them by the JTPA system force them to view a job as the only positive placement allowable for adult clients. Even if, as individuals, SDA staffers see the appropriateness of placements into further education, they are working for a system which does not recognize that as a favorable outcome and they are quick to point out how they are penalized for the failure of any of their sub-contractors to achieve job placements.

The first two issues, the buyer/seller nature of the relationship and the increased interest of educational institutions in "selling" their "product" to the employment and training system, underscore the importance of the third. The fact that performance may be seen as a factor by some of the buyers (the SDAs) but not by the sellers (the schools and colleges in question) makes the status quo that much harder to change. In a conventional marketplace, sellers of a product that is not being bought by the intended clientele will modify the product or find a new buyer. If some of the educational providers are not aware of the dissatisfactions with their products or are unwilling to get involved in "training" rather than "education," change in their relationships with the SDAs is unlikely.

The next, and final, section of this study builds on this conceptual framework to suggest some questions which can hopefully be used to stimulate discussion on the priorities and strategies of any recommendations to promote further coordination on the service delivery level.

Questions to be Considered about Promoting Greater Coordination of Service Delivery

The conceptual view of coordination outlined in the first part of this chapter and based on the current study's research findings gives rise to a number of questions which can be used as a part of any discussion or decisionmaking about coordination. The four questions posed below are designed to be provocative and not necessarily to cover all the possible angles. The first question encourages decision makers to prioritize their reasons for promoting coordination of service delivery between the SDAs and the educational institutions. The second question follows up the first in a way that takes into account the mission mismatch discussed in the first part of the chapter. The third and fourth questions address implementation. The third looks at strategies that might be taken at a state-wide level in the context of the buyer-seller relationship described in the earlier in the chapter. The fourth and final question probes the tension between centralized and decentralized decisionmaking and explores whether coordination related decisions can or should be mandated at the state level.

Following each question is a brief discussion of potential responses. Like the questions themselves, the responses are designed to be provocative, not prescriptive or exhaustive. Rather they are intended to be suggestive of some

of the follow-up possibilities as well as the potential implications of priority selections or strategy formulations. It should be re-emphasized that, like the earlier part of this final chapter, this discussion focuses on coordination involving service delivery, not information-sharing or other aspects of coordination.

Any plan or proposal for redesign of the system to promote coordination must be based on a clear prioritization of the purpose(s) that is (are) to be served. The first suggested question addresses this:

1- What is the underlying goal of improving coordination?

The following represents a partial list of some factors (or combination of factors) which might provide the incentive to promote coordination.

A- Provide better service to the client

B- Utilize the untapped resources of the educational establishment

C- Cut costs and avoid duplication

D- Send some money into the educational system to help support its marginal programs (especially those being hurt by lean years of low enrollments)

E- Encourage the educational providers to be more job-placement oriented

F- Encourage the employment training sector to be more open to long-term educational strategies for clients

G- Allow for more comprehensive long-range state or regional strategic planning

While some people might advocate coordination for many, if not all, of the above reasons, the exercise of prioritizing responses to question 1 may be helpful in determining policy direction. An example of how a prioritized choice can have implications for policy decisions will be used to illustrate this point.

If, for instance, the goal of improving coordination is seen primarily or solely as (A) -- to better serve the client in moving through the existing system, one possible option would be to leave the diversity of existing service providers, but simplify the clients' trip through the bewildering array of services. This could be accomplished through the use, at intake and counseling centers, of computerized listings of all program offerings along with the eligibility requirements, costs, benefits, transportation, and other support services available in a geographic area. Computerized program listings are in place in the region referred to in the study by the pseudonym "Bakerston," but are of limited value unless they are coupled with a simplified and routinized buying of slots in on-going community college and vocational school programs for JTPA eligible clients. The purchasing of slots is already taking place in Alistair, but would need to be greatly expanded and simplified so that a client could routinely enroll in any appropriate courses in the area. Although implementing this approach is far from simple, if the only goal is better service to the client, <u>within the framework of the current system</u>, this combination of computerized listings with streamlined purchase of slots in a region would provide some improved coordination to the client, without requiring any fundamental change to either the SDA or the educational bureaucratic and operational structure.

This discussion of potential policy ramifications in response to selection of priority (A) is offered as an example of how the selection of a particular priority can shape and influence subsequent considerations. Priority (A) happens to be one which essentially leaves the status quo of who actually delivers services intact. However, most of the rest of the priorities (B) - (G) listed above, along with other goals that might not have been listed, go

beyond simplifying access to the existing array of programs, and include an increase in the utilization of the resources of the educational providers for employment and training needs. Any policy formulations to meet priorities which challenge the status quo and necessitate a greater level of coordination of service delivery might benefit from a consideration of a second question, which arises from the discussion earlier in this chapter:

2- How can policy formulations take into account the mismatch of mission between educational institutions and the employment and training system?

This question addresses what changes to educational institutions and/or to employment and training agencies can and should be made. Once again, as a stimulus to discussion and thought, a partial list of options is outlined. Five possible resolutions to the mismatch between what the needs of the employment and training sector are and what colleges and schools customarily offer are listed below.

A- Change the goals of employment and training to include longer-term educational activities;

B- Change the goals of the educational providers, to move them more in the short-term training direction;

C- Encourage entrepreneurial educational institutions to set up peripheral units on their campuses that will do employment related training the way JTPA wants it done;

D- Encourage the systems to limit their coordination efforts to articulation agreements which clearly identify different roles, strengths, and missions; or

E Acknowledge the mismatch and discourage coordination concerning service delivery.

Once again, this partial list of options can be helpful in thinking through the formulation of priorities and ramifications of policy decisions. For

instance, the first three options require some level of institutional change on the part of SDAs or educational providers. Occasionally colleges opt for choice (A) and push to get the employment and training system to consider longer periods of education. Charlton Falls is one such college, and it has had some measure of success in getting its non-JTPA funders to accept a longer range, more educational-oriented approach. State-level planners might consider a few of the tradeoffs: this option has the advantages of drawing on the educational institutions for the type of work they customarily do and may arguably be in the best long term interests of the clients, but this choice comes at greater expense to the funder and a longer period of preparation for the clients. Furthermore an important constraint that is external to the SDAs and even to the state is placed by Federal JTPA job placement requirements which, absent changes in the Federal legislation, cannot be ignored.

Most educational institutions accept the guidelines laid out by the employment and training system and, if they get involved at all, operate in some version of (C). Community colleges, for instance, often set up, under their business and industry centers or divisions of continuing education, semi-autonomous units that can respond to external funders and deliver what they want. These generally remain "soft-money," marginal operations, normally without much impact on the overarching goals of the institution. Because these programs are often offered on a non-credit basis and remain essentially separate from the rest of the college, they can be set up in more of a "training" format. Nonetheless, in many cases, this approach still may not be enough to meet the needs of the SDAs for short-term job preparation. Rarely, for instance, do educational institutions set up the self-paced open entry/exit approach used by most skills centers.

A thoughtful discussion of these three options, as well as the more articulated approach of option (D), or the backing off from service delivery coordination of (E), lay the framework for the third question which concerns steps which might be taken toward redesign of the system:

3- What can the state do to affect the interaction between the educational and the employment and training systems?

Three of the many possible approaches are outlined here as a stimulus to discussion. These approaches take into account the buyer/seller nature of the relationship discussed in the earlier part of this chapter.

A- Leave the employment and training system as is, as a free market for buyers (the SDAs), but broaden its scope and funnel more of the state monies through it. This approach leaves the community colleges and vocational schools, in many cases, on the outside, looking in. The uncomfortable position in which they find themselves may encourage them to adopt a more job-placement focus institutionally or to set up marginal sub-units which do. This approach appears to have considerable current political support, especially in the legislature. Part of the reason for transforming PICs into Regional Employment Boards was to have given the REBs expanded jurisdictional scope to encompass most job-related instruction in the Commonwealth. Although the establishment of the REBs has not expanded the scope of the PIC as dramatically as expected (and as feared by many of the educators interviewed for this study) more recent attempts by the legislature to line-item transfer Department of Education adult

education funds into the Department of Employment and Training appear to have a similar motivation.

If the political push to funnel more educational monies through DET and the REBs succeeds, then educational institutions will find themselves under increased pressure to work with their SDAs. Perhaps the pressure will be sufficient to bring about substantial enough changes in their approach, especially toward placement outcomes, that the SDAs will take notice and contract with them. This transformation of the relationship between SDA and educational providers is a slow process, since organizations long remember their disappointments with one another. Nonetheless, in this scenario, there will undoubtedly be some movement, especially if the bureaucratic constraints referred to in Chapter 3 are reduced and if reductions in enrollments and funding continue to motivate the educators. (Whether or not this transformation is desirable and in the long-term interest of the Commonwealth is another question, one which is tied in to the priority-setting discussion outlined in questions 1 and 2 above.) In any case, in regions which have a vested skills center, there is likely to be little or no change, since, in the absence of other incentives, there is no inherent reason for the SDA to even notice what the educational institutions are doing. One such incentive may come from the decline in the funding base of the SDAs. Substantial deceases in funding may put pressure on marginal programs at skills centers, and encourage SDAs to look more closely at educational providers.

B- Use incentives to promote coordination of service delivery through the statewide RFP processes. Suggested by a number of participants, this approach is a kind of affirmative action for educational institutions, setting up a

funding mechanism that rewards SDAs for contracting with them. This strategy has worked in the past, at least on a one-shot basis, but it is not clear whether it can make long term differences. Drumlin's SDA director, who is quite convinced that this approach is the only one which will bring the parties to the table, makes two important caveats about it. First, it has to be new money and not perceived as pulled out of existing institutional budgets. The second point is that it has to be sustained, not just be funded for a year or so until the state priorities get changed.

Both warnings are important because they underscore the costs of such an approach, which may make implementation of this particular strategy to promote coordination unlikely in the current budgetary climate.

C- Utilize the presumptive deliverer plan discussed in the Bakerston region, which eliminates the free market approach and puts more power in the hands of the sellers, the educational institutions, and less in the buyers, the SDAs. This approach would be consistent with a priority emphasis on option (D) in the last question -- the development of an articulated model that recognizes that institutions have different roles, missions and areas of expertise. Its chief advantages are that the plan does not have to cost more and may be designed to draw on the strengths of many institutions. In the Bakerston model, for instance, the SDA utilizes the community college in its areas of post-secondary expertise but continues to contract out, on a competitive basis, some of the more basic remedial work and skills instruction. A chief disadvantage to the presumptive deliverer strategy is that it may be seen as undercutting the autonomy of the SDAs and therefore, at the minimum, can be expected to be unpopular in the employment and training community. It may also

reduce the SDAs' ability to purchase quality programs, depending on how easily they can reject a presumptive deliverer. The lack of competition may take the pressure off schools and colleges to be accountable, so that other systems of accountability would need to be developed.

If these problems can be worked out, presumptive delivery along the lines it has been proposed in Bakerston has the appeal of selecting institutions based on their level of expertise and allowing a comprehensive, articulated model to be developed within a region. [In addition to the model discussed here pseudonymously from "Bakerston," the Council's handbook on vocational education/employment and training coordination models, Making Connections -- Between Education and Employment Training provides details (including contact persons) about other regions which have instituted a presumptive delivery approach. In one region, for instance, an agreement provides a clearly articulated career ladder in which clients enrolled in the entry level stages of training at a vocational school or skills center can earn both apprenticeship hours and credits toward degree programs at the participating community college.]

A final question about the implementation of any coordination-related strategy concerns the feasibility or advisability of a state-wide mandated approach to influencing the interaction between the two systems.

4- Can any statewide mandated approach work in all the regions?

The great diversity in regional populations served and wide variety of philosophies and approaches taken by the SDAs and educational leaders in each

area underscore the pertinence of this question.

The Bakerston SDA director, proud of the presumptive deliverer approach that has been worked out with Barrington Community College, offers a cautionary message about the universal application of this approach. Although his statement is directed at the particular presumptive deliverer plan, it could just as easily be applied to any state-level approach and helps frame the final question for any state-wide discussion on implementing change:

> People become concerned whenever there appears to be any state-level move toward presumptive delivery. What needs to happen is that in order to be implemented, it should be developed at the local level. The individual colleges, individual vocational schools, and SDAs [need to be involved]. Otherwise the state will have a program that looks nice but won't work.

Appendix I: Methodology

Research Design:

A- Sampling

Four of the state's 15 SDAs were selected for case studies. The criteria for screening were decided by the Leadership Committee of the State Council on Vocational Education, composed of community college presidents, comprehensive and vocational school superintendents and state level leaders in the education and employment and training sectors. See Acknowledgements for complete listing.

The sites were selected, after preliminary screening, to represent, as much as possible, the diversity of SDA regions in Massachusetts. Attempts were made to balance geography; different types of relationships between the SDA and the PIC; the urban, suburban, or rural nature of the region; different levels of local interest in economic development; and different percentages of clients of the SDA for whom English is a second language. Sites were chosen which appeared to represent a diversity of levels of, and attitudes towards, coordination.

B- Interview Methodology

Once the SDAs to be studied were selected, permission for access was secured by the Director and senior project consultant of the State Council. In no case was permission for access and inclusion in the study denied. A meeting or series of meetings were held with each set of SDA directors, PIC chairs, community college presidents and vocational school superintendents. These meetings provided round-table discussions on the nature of coordination in the delivery area and provided a backdrop for the one-to-one interviews which

followed.

Individual follow-up interviews were held with some of these CEOs, along with a selection of others within their organizations who have (or would have) responsibility for coordination (if it existed). In all, approximately 7-10 individuals in each delivery area were interviewed. These included:

--Community college presidents, deans, continuing education deans, program directors;

--Vocational school superintendents, program directors, grants managers;

--City high school occupational education directors;

--SDA directors and staff;

--PIC directors and chairs;

--Skills center directors;

--Regional coordinators and staff members for DOE;

--Regional coordinators and staff members for DET

C Confidentiality

Permission to participate in the study was requested from the top-down. The State Council's Director and its project consultant asked the leaders of the selected SDAs, PICs, community colleges and vocational schools for their participation in the preliminary meeting and for their approval and encouragement for their staff to participate in subsequent interviews. Intervievees were told that all information presented in the study report would respect the confidentiality of the participating organizations and individuals. All organizations and individuals are referred to by pseudonyms in the written report. Furthermore, no information provided in one-to-one interviews was directly used in subsequent interviews in ways that might identify any individual source.